

A PRIMER OF
LITERARY CRITICISM

HOLLINGWORTH



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LITERARY CRITICISM**

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A PRIMER OF LITERARY CRITICISM

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PREFACE

THERE has been of late years an increasing tendency to require, of those who are studying English Literature, some ability to describe the impression which it makes on them, and to show how the author succeeds in producing that impression.

Some learners may be able to do this spontaneously, but in most cases help in the form of hints and worked examples will be necessary.

This *Primer*—for it is intended to be no more than a primer—is an attempt to supply the necessary help, and is written throughout from the beginner's point of view. For practical purposes it seemed well to deal somewhat more fully with short passages which can be printed in full than with complete works to which general reference only can be made.

It is assumed that the book will be used as a companion to the observant reading of English Classics, not as a substitute for that reading. This has been borne in mind in the numerous exercises which follow each chapter, and which the teacher or even the learner will have no difficulty in fitting by selection and adaptation to the particular works with which he is himself concerned.

In the Index will be found not only references to the body of the work, but also dates and such information with regard to writers mentioned as is required in order that the reader may understand what is said about them.

In dealing with contemporary literature, no attempt has been made to cover the ground at all completely : the authors mentioned have been chosen on the score of their appeal to the beginner or of the distinctive character of their style rather than for their intrinsic literary worth.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

For the second edition of this book a fifth chapter dealing with the "comparative method" of assessing literary value has been added. This method has lately been brought into prominence by such writers as I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis, to whose work this additional chapter owes much of its inspiration.

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PRIMER OF LITERARY CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS STYLE ?

Style is regarded by some people as useless ornamentation, much liked by schoolmasters but of no value to the ordinary man. Yet style is in reality everybody's concern: it is merely the way in which we write; we all have a style, though some of us have a very bad one. Try to recollect the last "good story" you heard spoilt in the telling, and you will find that its failure to provoke a laugh was wholly due to faults of style—bad arrangement, perhaps, or wordiness or lack of clearness. Style is, however, a great deal more than freedom from obvious faults, such as prolixity and obscurity: a tale told in a clear, straightforward way is not necessarily told well. Take, for instance, the death of Colonel Newcome, one of the most pathetic scenes in literature.

Some time afterwards Ethel came in with a scared face to our pale group. "He is calling for you again, dear lady," she said, going up to Madame de Florac, who was still kneeling; "and just now he said he wanted Pendennis to take care of his boy. He will not know you." She hid her tears as she spoke.

She went into the room where Clive was at the bed's foot; the old man within it talked on rapidly for a while: then again he would sigh and be still: once more I heard him say hurriedly, "Take care of him when I'm in India"; and then with a heart-rending voice he called out, "Léonore, Léonore!" She was kneeling by his side now. The patient's voice sank into faint murmurs; only a moan now and then announced that he was not asleep.

At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, "Adsum!" and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master.

Now let us give the same account in a clear, straightforward way.

By and by Ethel came in, looking scared like the rest of us. She went up to Madame de Florac, who was still on her knees, and said to her, "He wants you again, and a minute or two ago he said Pendennis was to look after his boy." "He is incapable," she added, as she furtively wiped her eyes, "of recognising you."

There is no need to go on: nobody would shed tears over the re-written death-bed scene. Yet it "says the same things." No, that is exactly what it does not do. Thackeray's words are simple words that bring with them memories of everyday life; but they are so selected and arranged that the impression they give is never commonplace, never lacking in dignity: the sentences are very short, so that they seem like echoes of the little, jerky, restrained phrases that we all use when we can scarcely master our grief. The second version has none of these merits; where it uses simple words they are, as our grandmothers would have said, "low." "Looking scared like the rest of us": there is almost a humorous ring about that; "a minute or two ago"—that is one of the vague and colourless expressions which we have worn out by constant use; "wiped her eyes"—that is too concrete; it calls up a picture of a blubbered face and a pocket-handkerchief. The trailing sentences with their loosely-linked coordinate and subordinate clauses are suited not to the expression of restrained grief, but to hurried and rather inconsequential narrative.

Our anonymous bungler, too, appears to think that pathos is helped by words of Latin origin. "Incapable, added, furtively, recognising"—all these he uses where he hopes to affect us most. He is wrong. These are not the simple words which we hear as children from our mothers; they are words which we learn at school, and they bring with them memories of thinking instead of feeling. "Added" suggests sums, "incapable" suggests estimates of ability—school reports, angry masters, testimonials, "drunk and incapable"—"furtively" suggests slyness and cunning, detective tales and theft. If you compare

the two versions, you will perhaps find some more faults in the account which aims merely at being "clear and straightforward."

Nor is it only when we wish to be funny or pathetic that we need a good style: style is just as important if an author would terrify, horrify, excite, or merely interest his readers.

What then is style? Style is the body to which thought is the soul, and through which it expresses itself. And, in literature at least,

"Of the soul the body form doth take;
For soul is form, and doth the body make."

It varies from the outworn phrase and faulty syntax of the fifth-rate journalist to the perfection of Francis Thompson's

I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me.

Those of us who find even the composition of a simple letter a task involving rough drafts, may despair of ever being able to express our deepest feelings; it is not for us, we think, to describe moonlight on wet glades or compose poems in honour of our lady-love.

But our forefathers were not so inarticulate. When the Angles gathered round the fire at night, each was expected to sing a poem. Cædmon, the stableman, who knew no songs, slunk away in shame. Of course, not every farm-labourer composed immortal verse—only the great bards could do that—but even farm-labourers were expected to remember long poems, most could fill up with original matter any gaps in their memory, and many could turn a tale or a sentiment into artistic form. Probably printing and the spread of education have made us lose the faculty. We read more and speak less; knowledge is no longer handed down by oral tradition; we have grown less sensitive to the *sound* of words, more at home with purely intellectual concepts.

Yet we are all, or nearly all, born with the story-telling and word-tasting faculties; quite young children will

invent tales and jingle rimes and decide that a new word is "funny" or "ugly" or "pretty." There is no need for the dullest of us to despair. We cannot all be Shakespeares; but we can all, with a little patience, learn to understand and love great prose and verse, learn to choose and arrange our words with an artist's care.

EXERCISE I.

1. Here are some more passages from great authors accompanied by versions written by an anonymous bungler. Decide in each case which is the original version, and write down a list of the points in which it is superior to the copy. Make your list as complete as possible.

(i) (a) Nothing in history or fiction, not even the story which Ugolino told in the sea of everlasting ice, after he had wiped his bloody lips on the scalp of his murderer, approaches the horrors which were recounted by the few survivors of that night. They cried for mercy. They strove to burst the door. Holwell who, even in that extremity, retained some presence of mind, offered large bribes to the gaolers. But the answer was that nothing could be done without the Nabob's orders, that the Nabob was asleep, and that he would be angry if anyone woke him. Then the prisoners went mad with despair. They trampled each other down, fought for the places at the window, fought for the pittance of water with which the cruel mercy of the murderers mocked their agonies, raved, prayed, blasphemed, implored the guards to fire among them. The gaolers in the meantime held lights to the bars, and shouted with laughter at the frantic struggles of their victims.

At length the tumult died away in low gaspings and moanings. The day broke. The Nabob had slept off his debauch, and permitted the door to be opened. But it was some time before the soldiers could make a lane for the survivors, by piling up on each side the heaps of corpses on which the burning climate had already begun to do its loathsome work. When at length a passage was made, twenty-three ghastly figures, such as their own mothers would not have known, staggered one by one out of the charnel-house. A pit was instantly dug. The dead bodies, a hundred and twenty-three in number, were flung into it promiscuously, and covered up.

(b) That night was very horrible. The victims, after in vain begging for mercy, trying to break out, and offering bribes to their gaolers, became panic-stricken. At length their struggles for water and air ceased ; and, when the Nabob next morning allowed the door to be opened, the survivors, twenty-three in number, came out. The dead, who numbered a hundred and twenty-three, were buried in one grave. The survivors were terribly changed.

(ii) (a) Now I will go to Innisfree,
And will build a rustic shed in a glade,
With bean rows and a hive for the bee.
I will live alone in the hut I have made.

(b) I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made ;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

(iii) (a) She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars. Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the colour of the sky itself was the most wonderful ; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened ; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morning. " O ! " she cried, joy catching at her voice, " O ! it is the dawn ! "

(b) When she looked up, she saw that most of the stars were set, and the rest were growing faint. The colour of the sky was extremely beautiful—a softer and brighter blue than that of the night, a colour which one only sees just before dawn. " O ! " she said, in a voice broken with happiness, " the morning is coming."

(iv) (a) Dark to me is the earth. Dark to me are the heavens.
Where is she that I loved, the woman with eyes like stars?

Desolate are the streets. Desolate is the city.
A city taken by storm, where none are left but the slain.

(b) Sky and earth are dark to me,
Drear and dread the city lies.
Where is she gone, who had star-like eyes ?
The streets seem dark when I cannot see
Her whom I loved ; and the city lies spread
Like a captured city filled with dead.

2. Nancy is a poor girl, brought up as a member of a vile gang. She comes to desire a better life, and meets in secret a lady who is interested in her. Bill Sikes, a brutal member of the gang, whom she loves, convinced that she is betraying them, bursts into her room and murders her. Write the murder scene. When you have written it, turn to *Oliver Twist*, Chapter 47, and see where and why Dickens' account is more thrilling than yours.

3. Years ago Peter Jenkyns, when a lad, bored by life in a small town, dressed himself up as his elder and very staid sister, and walked about with an imitation baby in his arms. A crowd collected, Peter's father came up, saw what had happened, snatched the pillow from Peter, and thrashed the lad. Tell the tale in the person of Miss Matty, his other sister, who is now an old woman. Compare your account with Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*, Chapter 6.

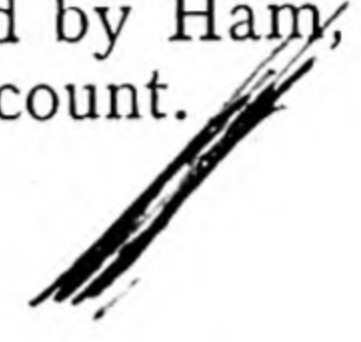
4. Compare with the account of the death of Colonel Newcome as many as you can of the following death scenes:—Little Nell (*Old Curiosity Shop*, Chapter 62), Jo (*Bleak House*, Chapter 47), Mr. Dorrit (*Little Dorrit*, Chapter 19), Dora (*David Copperfield*, Chapter 53), Sidney Carton (*Tale of Two Cities*, Chapter 35), Maggie Tulliver (*Mill on the Floss*, last chapter), Falstaff (*Henry V.*, II. iii.), Lear (*Lear*, V. iii.), Smike (*Nicholas Nickleby*, Chapter 58), Sir Roger de Coverley (*Spectator*, No. 517), Amy Robsart (*Kenilworth*, Chapter 41), Tess (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Chapter 59), Front de Bœuf (*Ivanhoe*, Chapter 31), Bill Sikes (*Oliver Twist*, Chapter 50), Barkis (*David Copperfield*, Chapter 30). Which of these do you think the most pathetic? Which the most horrible? or exciting? or grotesque? or tragic? Try to account for the effect they have upon you. Do any of them seem to you faulty? In what way?

5. A boy of eight, who has been spoilt by his widowed mother, is dying from consumption. Write a death-bed scene.

6. Read the account of the burning of Torquilstone (*Ivanhoe*, Chapter 32). Write a description of a fire in a slum.

7. Read the description of the flood in *The Mill on the Floss* (last chapter). Imagine that your riverside bungalow is flooded; write a letter to a friend, telling him your adventures.

8. Read the storm scene in *David Copperfield* (Chapter 55). Imagine that Steerforth was saved by Ham, and is telling David what he felt. Give his account.



CHAPTER II

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

You have now, especially if you have worked through Exercise I., seen that a good style is an essential part of a good story. We have next to consider what it is that makes style.

First of all, a good style is one that is suitable for its purpose—you would not write a funeral sermon in the style of Mark Twain, or a chemical treatise in triolets. But that does not take us very far. Shelley's or Chesterton's style is suitable for its purpose: why and how is it suitable? Why is it that *Paradise Lost* written by Chesterton would be something entirely different from the epic we have? Because Chesterton and Milton have, in the first place, a different way of expressing their ideas. This, then, gives us our two main elements of style—choice of ideas and expression of ideas, though in the best styles the two are inseparably interwoven.

Let us first consider the choice of ideas. At the bottom of the scale comes the writer whose sole aim is to impart information. For him there is scarcely any choice: the facts are there, and he has merely to state them. But as soon as he wishes to interest or amuse, persuade or sadden, a writer has to select his facts.

He may merely state general principles; he may illustrate general principles by particular cases. Note the use of detail on p. 4; it is one of the things which distinguish Macaulay from Mr. Dry-as-Dust. Not that detail is always desirable; Macaulay himself points out that Milton, instead of giving exact details, uses "dim intimations," so that Heaven and Hell, angels and devils are for us remote and sublime, shrouded in mystery.

But if the general and the abstract wisely used give a greater spaciousness, a sense of the sublime and the awe-inspiring, the detailed and the concrete make a more vivid impression.

He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured.

That does not give us a clear picture of Satan; but we can see Keats's Autumn—

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies.

Nor is it only the greater amount of detail which makes the picture real. Keats has the power of visualisation; he makes us see Autumn because he himself sees her more clearly than if she were actually a living person before him. He does not say, "Let me personify the idea of Autumn and give her appropriate tributes." Gray, too, often does—

And Truth severe, by fairer Fiction dress'd.

This power of visualisation varies immensely in individuals; some of us have a bright mental image of our uncle or the cook as soon as we hear their names, others can with difficulty recall whether their noses turn up or down. But none of us can hope to equal Chaucer and Dickens, whose slightest sketches have a startling aliveness.

Not all detail, however, is explanatory, interesting detail as in a guide-book, or beautiful or grotesque picture-detail like Tennyson's or Lewis Carroll's. Carlyle is fond of detail which suggests motion—"stands or sprawls up"; Pope's mind no sooner calls up one idea than it finds another to compare or contrast with it—"a timorous foe, and a suspicious friend"; the emotions and thoughts of Meredith's and Browning's characters are treated exhaustively, but we have no clear picture of Sludge the Medium or Diana of the Crossways in the flesh.

that which indicates

The kind of idea used, indeed, is an excellent index to the author's mind and tastes: to Swift most things suggest the disgusting; we can trace the architect in Hardy, the artist-decorator in Morris. The writer of uncertain taste will use inappropriate ideas—mixing the sad with the merry or the commonplace with the sublime, like Donne often and Milton sometimes; Ella Wheeler Wilcox is commonplace, Bacon pregnant, Browne subtle and exalted.

We now come to the second element of style—the expression of ideas. The charm of all writing is a nice mingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar. Like the Athenians, we seek always some new thing; but the entirely new, if it existed, would be too great a strain upon our imagination and credulity. [Good style is in the main a matter of the perfect use of contrast and similarity, the new and the old.]

[In the sphere of expression, repetition—either of idea or of phrase—is perhaps the simplest, as it is one of the oldest, ways of linking new and old.] Folk-tales and ballads are full of it, from Cinderella's three nights at the ball and the tale of *The Three Little Pigs* who built houses, to *Edom O'Gordon* and *Binnorie*. The parallelism of the *Psalms*—

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.
 Depart from evil and do good ;
 Seek peace, and pursue it.

the refrain of the mediaeval lyric—

Timor Mortis conturbat me,

or the modern music-hall song are examples of the same tendency. But the great poets can get from it an exquisite music and a wonderful suggestiveness. Take Tennyson's *Break, break, break*.

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Here the threefold *Break* of the first line is caught up at the end, to be followed each time by a similar but different phrase. In the second stanza again, the first two lines are exactly parallel in structure to the second two, while the repeated *O* forms a slight link between the second and third stanzas. In the third stanza the last two lines are again similar in construction. The suggestion—for it is no more—of a refrain obtained in this way fills the poem with a wistful and haunting melody, and at the same time recalls the slow inwash and shattering of the waves, continuous but irregular.

Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar* gets, in the same way, something of the same effect; *Go not, happy day*, in his *Maud*, uses repetition in a dainty pirouette of delight; in *The Passing of Arthur* the three journeys of Sir Bedivere, himself so often "bold," to the lake, gives another perfect example of repetition modified so that the phrases are at once old and new; Swinburne's long soliloquy of Iseult at Tintagel is set in a wonderful framework of storm, and is broken at intervals by semi-repetitions—

And swordlike was the sound of the iron wind,
And as a breaking battle was the sea.

And as a full field charging was the sea,
And as the cry of slain men was the wind.

And all her soul was as the breaking sea,
And all her heart anhungered as the wind.

which reflect and emphasise Iseult's wild prayer at the same time as they break it up into sections and so prevent monotony.

This apparently simple method, indeed, is capable of infinite modulations, each giving a different effect. Compare, for their varying shades of anguish, the cry of David,

O my son, Absalom ! O Absalom, my son, my son !

of Samson Agonistes, lamenting his blindness,

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !


and of Lear to his unnatural daughters,

You think I'll weep ;
No, I'll not weep :
I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep.

or, most poignant of all, Lear's cry as he bends over the dead Cordelia,

No, no, no life !
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all ? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never !

The fortieth chapter of *Isaiah* uses the same means for the exquisite restfulness of verses 1 and 2, the despairing cry of verses 6-8, and the ecstatic joy of verse 9. Note, too, the cumulative menace in *Isaiah*, chapter ix. and x. of the refrain, "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still"; and the lyrical delight expressed by the similarities of construction in *I Corinthians*, xiii.



Yet, at the other end of the scale, we have comic repetition, conscious—

O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown !
How could you serve me so ?

or unconscious—

O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O !

Then, again, there are Dickens's repeated references to characteristics or mannerisms of his personages—Mrs. Gamp's constant allusions to Mrs. 'Arris, Mrs. Micawber's "I will never desert Mr. Micawber," Mr. Cruncher's spiky hair, and Mrs. Cruncher's "flopping." Or you may have the repetition of situation as in *Geraint and Enid*; the symmetrical love affairs of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the exactly similar hoaxing of Beatrice and Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*; the "he childed as I fathered" of *King Lear*.

Perhaps you think you have discovered the secret—repetition means emphasis; emphasise a tragic phrase or situation and you get a tragic effect; emphasise a comic phrase or situation and you get a comic effect. But that is the least part of the secret; the choice of the word, balance and contrast and rhythm—all these are at least as important as the mere repetition. Continue Lear's *Nevers* through another two lines and you have absurdity.

The need for moderation is even more evident in another form of repetition—alliteration. Alliteration comes naturally to the English tongue; to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers it was a part of the very structure of verse; and whenever our poetry has been most national—with Langland, the Elizabethans, the Victorians—alliteration has been prominent. Only in the Augustan Age, when we aped France, has it been largely avoided and despised. Yet few things can so soon suggest artifice instead of art. Shelley's

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night.

is beautiful; so is Swinburne's

Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet ;

but, for all its beauty, there is a touch of the mechanical in his

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears ;
Grief, with a glass that ran.

and the elaborate cross-alliteration of Lyly—*the faith of men, though it fry in their words, it freezeth in their works*—grows intolerably wearisome.

Assonance, *i.e.* a similarity of vowel sound, is a form of repetition less noticeable to the English ear; a poem which substitutes it for rime misses its mark. But assonance is a great instrument for the playing of word music, as in Spenser's—

And let the roaring organs loudly play.

This line shows, too, how assonance may be—and often is—onomatopoeic, that is, may aim at suggesting ideas by imitative sound. Tennyson's lyrics in *The Brook* are an excellent example of this: others are:—

The sky-born brook
Chuckled.
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.

You will easily find more in your own reading.

Onomatopoeia and assonance, however, are but part of the choice of melodious words—a choice which again is largely decided by the claims of similarity and contrast. Stevenson has very skilfully shown how much the description of Cleopatra's barge (*Antony and Cleopatra* II. ii. 195-202) depends for its beauty upon the exquisite way in which vowels and consonants are repeated and varied. This is one of those things which distinguish the great poet or prose writer from the little man, though even the greatest may sometimes fail. Shakespeare's—

When first your eye I eyed

is ugly; so is, to come nearer our own day, Hardy's "Death's deaf thrall": in each case there is too much

repetition of sound. In Byron, on the other hand, there is often too much variety:—

Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot
Though parting from that mother he did shun.

is as unmusical as may be. Contrast Shelley's—

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own ?
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone.

Read that—as you should read all poetry—aloud, and note its “mighty harmonies.” Then analyse the sounds. You will see that the dominant sound is *m*; but it is woven into an intricate pattern of music. First we pass from *m* to *l* (*lyre, leaves, falling, like*) and *f* (*forest, falling, and the related v in even, leaves*). In the next two lines *t* takes its turn (*tumult, mighty, take, autumnal and tone*). But there is no sudden break. Our ear has been prepared for it by *forest, what, its*; the *l* sound is not completely dropped (*tumult, autumnal*); even the *f, v* sound (*from*) passes over into the related *th* (*the, thy, both*), and the *n* sound (*harmonies, autumnal, tone*), itself related to the dominant *m*, echoes *own*. Of the few remaining consonants *k*, the only rugged sound, is harmonised in one case by its use with the liquid *l* and in the other by identity of vowel sound (*make, take*); while the sibilants, always difficult sounds to manage, though beautiful when rightly used, are confined almost entirely to the first two lines (*as, forest, is, leaves, its*), where they admirably suggest the rustle of dead leaves. There is not a jarring note anywhere, and you will find the vowels as skilfully varied as the consonants.

Not, of course, that Shelley planned out his melodies with the scientific exactness of a Bach; he wrote down the words “as they came,” merely altering, perhaps, a phrase or two which did not “sound right.” Whatever the more sophisticated poet of to-day may do, the older masters wrote by ear, not by rule; and if you think that such an

analysis as we have just attempted makes "poetry a mere mechanic art," well, try your own hand at making melodies.

Besides the choice of words, rhythm and sometimes rime help to make word-music. Both of these, again, are based on the same principle of similarity and contrast.

Rime may seem too simple a matter for comment: you may think that a rime is either good or bad, and there is an end of it. It is not even the beginning, for a skilful poet may sometimes deliberately use a false rime as a sort of discord by suspension to be resolved into the harmony of the following perfect rimes. Moreover, there is the comic rime, which gets its effect by surprise, by showing us a similarity we never expected: Butler, Byron, and Browning all loved this:—

And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?

Double or treble rimes, too, even when not in themselves comic, generally sound comic to the Englishman—

Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

Again, stanza-forms where the rimes come often have usually a more "singing" quality.

You're the maiden posies,
And so graced
To be placed
Fore damask roses.

If the lines are short and the rimes in couplets, there is a danger of doggerel, *e.g.* Butler's *Hudibras*—"scorn made metrical;" if the lines are longer and end-stopped, the couplet rime grows monotonous, though in Pope's verse at its best the sharp snip-snap of the rime emphasises the wit.

On the other hand, the beauty of the sonnet and the Spenserian stanza are due very largely to the satisfaction which the rime gives—a final concord, a resolution of difference into likeness.

Yet, exquisitely melodious as rime can be, many poets have felt that for the sublimest effects it is unsuitable; that it introduces a tinge of prettiness. So anxious are they to avoid a jingle that, in many Ode-forms, the rimes come infrequently enough for the careless reader to overlook them.

Tragedy and epic—the most solemn forms of verse—are almost invariably unrimed. Here the poet depends on that other form of recurrence, rhythm.

All rhythm is based on likeness and unlikeness: in prose rhythm, unlikeness predominates; in verse rhythm, likeness. [That is to say, poetry has a normal line which sets the measure; the music comes from the variations in the measure.] So we get the regular blank verse line:—

And this our life exempt from public haunt.

But a whole speech in this mould would be monotonous: so Shakespeare gives us a speech (*As You Like It*, II. i.) where the pause is varied—now towards the beginning, now in the middle, and now near or at the end of the line; where the stress is varied, trochees being substituted for iambs¹; where there are extra syllables in the line.

¹The student with a treacherous memory may like to use Coleridge's lines as a mnemonic:—

Trochee | trips from | long to | short.

From long to long in solemn sort

Slow Spónd | ée stálks, | stróng fóot | yét ill | able

Hárdly to | cóme up with | Dáctyl tri | sýllable;

Iámb | ics márch | from shórt | to lóng;

With a léap | and a bóund | the swift Án | apaests thróng.

Here, as often in speaking of English verse, "long" is used for "stressed syllable," and "short" for "unstressed syllable."

This management of rhythm is an important part of the poet's art; by his rhythm he can express eagerness or weariness, speed or rest, love or hate. Anapaests and dactyls give swiftness, spondees slowness and dignity, iambs regularity, trochees a tripping movement. Compare the tramp of the horses' feet in Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, the sleepy wistfulness of his *Lotus-Eaters*, the tumultuous passion of his *Locksley Hall*, the sick despair of *Mariana*, the solemn grandeur of his *Passing of Arthur*, and you will see a little—but only a little—of the infinite variety to be obtained.

Prose rhythm is not so easily distinguished, and is for this reason too often ignored. Yet even in "plain" prose it is important—a halting style, with jerky disconnected sentences or long, shapeless, dependent clauses, will ruin the most learned book. In any prose whose first aim is not to impart knowledge but to persuade or to give pleasure, good rhythm is as indispensable as in verse. Read in the Authorised Version Ch. 13 of *I Corinthians*, and then turn to the Revised Version: the magic is gone. Why? *Love*, to the modern, is at least as beautiful a word as *Charity*. But *love* is a single syllable; *charity* is a dactyl; and the whole chapter is set to a rhythm which plays upon dactyl and trochee and spondee in such a way that the prevailing effect is dactylic. The substitution of *love* for *charity* destroys the rhythmic scheme: half the emotional appeal is lost.

In your reading, then, do all you can to cultivate your sense of rhythm—it is a sense very highly developed in the young, too often stifled in the adult.

Rhythm is not the last of the elements of style based on similarity and dissimilarity; there are the figures of speech—simile, metaphor, metonymy, personification, and the pun; antithesis, climax, and anti-climax. Of these the first five are clearly dependent upon comparison, and the next on contrast. Climax and anti-climax are not so evidently developments of the same principle; yet, when you come to examine them, you will find that climax is nothing but the repetition of an effect with increasing force; while anti-climax, a sudden and unexpected drop in force,

gains all its power from the contrast between what we anticipate and what we find.

Do not, then, make the mistake of regarding these figures as arbitrary ornaments of speech: in their origin they are nothing of the kind; they are merely one more expression of that natural impulse of the mind to compare and contrast, to seek similarity and dissimilarity, which we have been considering.

One of the most generally used figures of speech is simile. In common speech we often use it merely as a sort of superlative—"He went like the wind," *i.e.* as quickly as possible, using as an illustration what before the advent of aeroplanes was one of the swiftest things we knew.

But if we are imaginative, we shall use simile for many more purposes—to explain, to add vividness, perhaps to provoke a laugh. A child, having seen snow for the first time, may explain that he saw "something called snow, like little bits of ice-cream falling out of the sky—not raspberry ice, but the white kind." This is at once more vivid and more exact than a description of the snow's qualities. So when Henry James says, "Her mind . . . bleated and strayed like an unbranded sheep," we understand immediately what he means. He might have said, "Her mind was unable to think in a logical fashion, could not follow a connected argument, lacked independence, and was not fully under her control"; but that would have been less concise and much duller. Instead he gives us in "bleated" the sense of stupidity and helplessness, in "strayed" the sense of irrelevance and inability to reason, in "unbranded" the sense of something lost and ownerless, in "sheep" the sense of feeble muddle-headedness. In addition, the phrase as a whole suggests the humorous side of her misfortune, partly because the picture it evokes is itself funny, partly because the comparison is unexpected—there is something incongruous between mind, the noblest part of man, and a bleating sheep.

Dickens is, perhaps, our greatest master of the bizarre comparison; you will find it interesting to hunt examples in his novels. Kipling and Chesterton, too, will give you good sport.

Just as a simile can add humour, so it can add pathos or awe, terror, or anger.

Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes,

She looks like sleep.

Her tears fall still as oak-leaves after frost.

Each of these is beautiful in a different way. As we read the first, we think of the exquisite softness of deep sleep, the gentle passing from weariness into peace; we catch an atmosphere. The second gives us, as nothing else could, the mingled grace and queenliness of the dead Cleopatra; we see a picture. In the third, too, we see a picture, but here the picture is that of the falling leaves, not that of the weeping woman—the simile has become a little cameo set in the poem; it has an independent existence.

Greek and Latin epic poets were very fond of similes which were even more independent than this, and some of our poets—notably Spenser, Milton, and Matthew Arnold—have imitated them. For instance, Arnold compares an armed man guarding a bridge to a waggon wedged in the snow blocking a mountain pass. But he is not content with this; his simile—eight lines of blank verse—describes in detail the hinds struggling to urge their cattle round the waggon, the scattering of the snow as they pass, the hot steam rising from the beasts. Before the simile is ended, we have completely forgotten the warder on the bridge.

In this case, then, we must retract our assertion that figures of speech are not ornaments added arbitrarily: in English, at any rate, the “classic simile,” beautiful as it is, has an artificial ring. We cannot persuade ourselves that the poet wandered from his subject unintentionally, led astray unconsciously by the picture that the comparison evoked: he has clearly shunted his train deliberately.

Metaphor takes the comparison a step further than simile: it identifies the two sides of the comparison.

This does not, however, make it more artificial; the poet's mind *sees* the two things as one. Just so the child, if it had not been told that what it saw was snow, would have said, "It has been raining ice-cream." So we find far more metaphor than simile in Anglo-Saxon poetry; the analysing tendency which turns the feeling of likeness into a finished comparison comes later. And metaphor has over simile the advantage of brevity; this is why many of the magic phrases of literature are metaphors:—

Man . . . walketh in a vain shadow.

Here the metaphor says infinitely more than any such bald statement as "Man is deluded." First of all it gives us a picture—a vision of a way-worn and bewildered man stumbling through the mist, as Christian went through the Valley of the Shadow of Death while around him the shapes of Satyrs and Demons gibbered in the darkness. Let us then repeat the words to ourselves and write down a list of the ideas they call up. "Walketh" suggests action, a mechanical advance, the pilgrimage of life, continuity, monotony, wandering, the weariness of a long journey. "In a vain shadow" suggests emptiness, futility, unreality, mystery, confusion, delusion, blindness, darkness and fear, uncertainty of goal and pathway, the presence behind the unreal shadow of some reality which casts the shadow. These thoughts are what occur to me: you may find others in your lists. We cannot say that the writer intended to convey all these ideas; but they are all there: the beauty and inspiration of literature are as often unconscious as conscious.

Consider, again, the line—

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.

Try to say that in unfigurative, matter-of-fact language and you cannot: it is like trying to filter bubbles. But one thing is evident: for the poet, the moonlight is a living thing.

If he lets this sense of its aliveness grow upon him, he passes easily to personification.

Death lays his icy hand on kings.

Here again, the poet, the eternal child, is doing what all children do. An imaginative child will talk to its teddy-bear or even to its table and chair and be perfectly convinced that they hear and answer. So, in Keats' *Ode to Autumn*, Autumn is a real person; so, in Shelley's *Cloud*, cloud and sea and sky and sun are living creatures with hopes and fears, joys and sorrows—even, sometimes, a love of practical jokes. This is the true personification.

But there is another kind, beloved of eighteenth-century poets, which consists chiefly in the use of capital letters:—

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil.

If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise.

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Ambition, Memory, Honour, and Flattery are not alive; we find it impossible to conceive of them as persons performing the actions with which they are credited. The poet is using a mere trick, an ornament, instead of writing what his imagination dictates. His cold intellectualism fails to move us; it is poles asunder from such sincere little cameos as we find in *Lamentations* i. 1-2.

The same feeling which gives us metaphor and personification is responsible for what Ruskin called the "pathetic fallacy"—the assumption that Nature sympathises with us, the skies weeping when we weep and the sun smiling when we smile. If you would see what a great poet can make of this idea, read the storm scene in *King Lear*; if you would see how the reverse of the idea can intensify grief, read Burns's *Ye Banks and Braes*—here the contrast between happy Nature and human despair adds a poignant irony.

Indeed contrast is at the base of all irony. What adds the worst sting to sorrow is the remembrance of happiness—

A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

We get it over and over again in Hardy's works, this sense of the incongruity between what is and what has

been or between what is and what might be. Thus in *My Cicely* the poet, returning after many years, sees—as he thinks—a tombstone to Cicely's memory; and mourns her—dead in her youth. Passing on, he discovers that the Cicely in the churchyard is not the girl he had known; his early love had become the coarse and bibulous ale-wife from whom he had shrunk in disgust, all unconscious of her identity, when first he arrived in the village.

So, too, in *In Memoriam*, Tennyson writes:—

O father, whereso'er thou be
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

A similar irony of situation is found in *Kenilworth* in the manner of Amy Robsart's death.

Not, of course, that all contrast is ironic. Often it is humorous. The bizarre comparison has already been considered, the pun—

Said she: My taste will never learn
To like so huge a man,
So I must beg you will come here
As little as you can,

makes us smile or groan by the contrast between the two meanings of the word *little*.

But besides these, there are all the other forms of incongruity—the harnessing of unlike ideas—

Smelling of musk and of insolence.

a conjunction which may become still more forcible if coupled with anticlimax—

There thou great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take and sometimes tea.

the invention of strange beasts—the Cheshire Cat or the Dong with the Luminous Nose; the use of incongruity between an action and the words used to describe it, as in mock-heroic; of incongruity between an action and the performer of it, as when Falstaff pretends to be Henry IV.; of incongruity between persons, as when the mountainous Falstaff is followed by the diminutive page.

You will, indeed, find that humour is generally based on a sense of incongruity—Sam Weller's sayings; Mrs. Jellyby's missionary activities; the temperance zeal of Mr. Stiggins; the alternate despair and hope of Mr. Micawber; the mingled learning and simplicity of Parson Adams, of the Vicar of Wakefield, of Dominie Sampson.

Simple contrast is used, too, for relief and to throw into greater prominence; so we get the comic relief of the Porter in *Macbeth*, the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, the Fool in *King Lear*. Or we have companion pictures, as in Chapter 33 of *Dombey and Son*; contrast in ideas as in Tennyson's *The Two Voices*; contrast in situation as in *The Lady of Shalott*, where there is at first on one side the bustle and life of the world, on the other the unchanging quiet of the Lady; contrast in movement, as when, in the same poem, the sunny, easy lilt which describes the passing of Lancelot changes suddenly to the tragic staccato speed of—

She left the web, she left the loom;

contrast in character, as in the scene where Lear gives away his kingdom.

Antithesis, perhaps the most direct form of contrast, has an appeal more purely intellectual than most figures of speech. You will generally find it in witty prose and verse—

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer.

Bacon, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Macaulay, Chesterton—these will afford the best examples. Always antithesis depends for its effect not only upon contrast, but upon balance; the two scales must be evenly weighted.

In climax and anticlimax, on the other hand, the appeal is due to uneven weighting—one scale is in the air and the other on the ground. Or, to change the comparison, climax starts *pianissimo* and ends *fortissimo*; anticlimax starts *fortissimo* and ends *pianissimo*. Often the two are combined, so that we get first an organ *crescendo*, and then a gradual sinking into silence. Excellent examples are the description of the storm in Tennyson's *Revenge*, the swell and ebb in the description of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, and Prospero's speech in *The Tempest* about "the cloud-capp'd towers."

The figures of speech we have just considered do not, of course, complete the list. The others—metonymy, synecdoche, etc.—are less important, and are often little more than varieties of those we have studied. But there remain a few other elements of style which should not be neglected.

Chief among these is the artistic choice of words. A true poet uses words to suggest as much as to describe. He may use proper names which are musical in themselves—

Usumcasane and Theridamas.

From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Causasus, and dark Iberian dales.

or which, in addition, call up great memories—

Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume.

He will always seek the new and vivid phrase instead of the outworn and colourless. To-day we have *the man in blue*, *needless to say*, *the festive occasion*, and a hundred other tags, the avoidance of which is the aim of every careful writer. It is the neglect of this principle which spoils much eighteenth-century work. The *swain*, the *fair sex*, the *finny tribe*, the *conscious look*—these and a thousand other expressions recur over and over again; they are a main constituent of pseudo-classic diction.

Conversely, the romantic poets—Wordsworth, Keats, and Tennyson especially—over and over again achieve the magic phrase, the key which opens the door into another world—

Magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Old, forgotten, far-off things and battles long ago.

The light that never was on sea or land,
The inspiration and the poet's dream.

Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.

These “jewels five words long” defy analysis; we cannot say *why* they affect us. But that is not the case with all fine phrases. Often, if we examine our emotions carefully, we find that an expression is full of suggestiveness. This, as we have seen, is often due to the use of a peculiarly pregnant metaphor; but it may, too, arise where there is no figure of speech, merely as a result of the choice of words. Turn back to the first chapter, and read again the passage from Thackeray and the bungler's imitation of it, and you will realise how large a part is played by this rightness of atmosphere in words.)

There are, too, less subtle kinds of suggestion—the use of colour words, for instance. Some of us are bad visualists; the poet may describe meadows and lakes, mountains and oceans, but we cannot see them; the novelist may tell us exactly in what corner of his hero's attic his broken-legged chair stood, but we have no clear mental picture—we cannot say whether it is a Windsor chair or a rush-seated one. But colours are so vivid and so simple that the dullest of us cannot say “green” without a bright green haze before his inner eye. Colour words change a drab poem into brightness. The skilful poet will avoid clashing colours as carefully as an artist. He will not say—

And in one hand she held
Pink dahlias, scarlet poppies, marigolds
Of orange-yellow, while the other raised
Lightly her sky-blue skirt with flounces green.

You will find it an interesting task to discover the favourite colours of poets. Tennyson loves the brighter hues—

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime.

Spenser has a fondness for contrasts of sun and shadow—black against yellow or white; Shelley weaves a rainbow from iridescent moonbeams.

Other things, too, there are in style—the balance and proportion which avoid monotony and exaggeration, the close observation and faithful portrayal of nature, of material objects, of the thoughts and passions of men; the attitude of mind which sees life as a vale of tears or a dream, a huge joke or a meaningless riddle; the subjectivity of the writer who identifies himself with what he describes; the objectivity of the writer who, cold and detached, draws his characters from the outside. But these are more individual matters; they border upon the Holy of Holies of style—personality. We can discover an author's mannerisms, and note that Hardy has a fondness for the verb "to lip," that Keats shows a preference for *lush* and such formations as *palely*; that Shelley likes hoary-headed youths, *inane* (as a noun), *dædal*, and *intense*; but when we have done all we can in this way, we have not reached the inner shrine.

EXERCISE II.

1. Study the following passages carefully. Write an appreciation of the use in each of repetition, stating exactly what effect is produced—

- (a) Work! work! work! till the cocks are crowing aloof,
Work! work! work! till the stars shine through the roof,
And it's Oh! to be a slave in the land of the barbarous Turk
Where woman has never a soul to save, if this be Christian
work!

Hood: *The Song of the Shirt*.

- (b) Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too.

Keats: *Ode to Autumn*.

- (c) O slowly, slowly rase she up,
And slowly put she on ;
And slowly rade she out the way
Wi' mony a weary groan.
The Queen's Marie.

- (d) I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all.
Keats: La Belle Dame Sans Merci.

- (e) Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.
Tennyson: The Princess.

- (f) Stop him! stop him! murder! thief! fire!—
Stop fire! stop fire!—Oh, Sir Anthony—call! call! bid'm
stop! murder! fire!
Sheridan: The Rivals.

2. Write a half-dozen or so lines of verse (any metre) or prose, using repetition to express (a) delight in the prospect of rest, (b) distaste for study, (c) love of the open air, (d) grief at the death of a favourite dog.

3. Discuss the use of similarity (including all forms of repetition) and contrast in the following:—

- (a) And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned
And surceased on the sky.
Hardy: The Souls of the Slain.

- (b) I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long and lank and brown,
As is the ribb'd sea-sand. . . .
I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown.
Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner.

- (c) My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O, my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.
Blake: The Little Black Boy.

- (d) Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair.

Tennyson: *In Memoriam*.

- (e) The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low.

Browning: *Meeting at Night*.

- (f) A foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

Tennyson: *The Palace of Art*.

- (g) Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life.

Shelley: *Adonais*.

4. Comment upon the choice of words and ideas in the following:—

- (a) And I heard the waters wagging in a long ironic laughter.
Hardy: *The Voice of Things*.

- (b) Belovëd, I am quickly out of sight.
I pray that you will love more than my dust.
Meredith: *Vittoria*.

- (c) Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence.
Wordsworth: *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*.

- (d) The loftiest star of unascended heaven
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.
Shelley: *Prometheus Unbound*.

- (e) Finish, good lady; the bright day is done,
And we are for the dark.
Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*.

- (f) Some of our descendants may see the chimney-pots as rich a purple as the mountain peaks, and find the lamp-posts as old and natural as the trees.—Chesterton: *The Defendant*.

(g) If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick bed. How the patient lords it there! . . . He changes *sides* oftener than a politician. Now he lies full length, then half-length, obliquely, transversely, head and feet quite across the bed; and none accuses him of tergiversation.—Lamb: *The Convalescent*.

(h) Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking
roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by
the wave.

Tennyson: *Maud*.

(i) I warm'd both hands before the fire of life ;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Landor.

5. Discuss the use of simile and metaphor in the following passages, saying whether the figure is appropriate, and mentioning what fresh ideas it suggests. In each case write down a simile or metaphor to suggest another aspect of the same subject.

(a) From the fixt lull of Heaven, she saw
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds.

Rossetti: *The Blessed Damosel*.

(b) And the tumbling billows like leap-frog came,
Each over the other's back.

Hood: *The Mermaid of Margate*.

(c) Thoughts black as death
Like a stirred pool in sunshine break.

Meredith: *Modern Love*.

(d) Suspicions amongst thoughts are like bats amongst birds—they ever fly by twilight.—Bacon: *Of Suspicion*.

(e) There is no antidote against the opium of time.

Sir T. Browne: *Urn-Burial*.

(f) The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Gray: *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*.

(g) The primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.

Shakespeare: *Macbeth*.

- (h) That inverted Bowl we call The Sky.
FitzGerald: *The Rubaiyât of Omar Khayyâm*.

(i) She had no imagination about anybody's life save on the side she bumped against.—H. James: *The Spoils of Poynton*.

6. Quote lines making generous use of the following sounds:—(i) *l*, (ii) *s*, (iii) *m*, (iv) *p*. In each case state what idea the sound suggests.

7. Draw up a sound-scheme of the following, and discuss its suitability to the ideas expressed:—

- (a) Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.

Keats: *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

- (b) All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long 'rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

Tennyson: *The Lotus-Eaters*.

- (c) From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation, there was not a single note of human anguish of which he was not master.

Macaulay: *Moore's Life of Lord Byron*.

8. Write a detailed appreciation of the metre of the following:—

- (a) Milton's sonnet on the Massacre of the Piedmontese, (b) Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, (c) Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, (d) Portia's speech in praise of mercy, (e) Shelley's *Adonais*, (f) Tennyson's *Lotus-Eaters*, (g) Browning's *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, (h) Arnold's *Requiescat*.

9. Criticise the rime scheme in (a) Wordsworth's *We are Seven*, (b) Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, (c) Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*.

10. Write down six phrases which seem to you particularly happy; and say, if you can, why you like them.

11. Read Tennyson's *The Palace of Art*: add (in prose or, preferably, in Tennyson's metre) another arras-picture.

12. Give examples of true and false personification, giving reasons for your classification.

13. Write down the ideas suggested to you by each of the following similes or metaphors:—

(a) Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
Tennyson: *The Palace of Art*.

(b) Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.
Tennyson: *A Dream of Fair Women*.

(c) All our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.
Shakespeare: *Macbeth*.

(d) Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky.
Omar Khayyám: *Rubaiyát*.

(e) One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste.
Omar Khayyám: *Rubaiyát*.

(f) In the fire of Spring
The Winter garment of Repentance fling,
Omar Khayyám: *Rubaiyát*.

(g) Bright else, and fast, the stream of life may roll. . . .
Yet each will have one anguish—his own soul
Which perishes of cold.
Arnold: *Progress*.

(h) The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.
Shelley: *Adonais*.

(i) Life's a single pilgrim,
Fighting unarmed amongst a thousand soldiers.
Beddoes: *The Fool's Tragedy*.

14. Write down metaphors expressing some of the qualities of a house, a child, a whale, sleep, death, expectancy, a cuckoo, time.

15. Make a detailed study of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; writing down in two columns all the direct contrasts you can find.

16. "Awry and doubled up are his gray bones" (Hardy). Give six other instances of the felicitous use of a colour word.

17. Rewrite as a chapter in a novel the account of Margaret's meeting with Henry of Cranstoun in Canto III. of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

18. Examine carefully some metaphors and similes of (a) Shelley, (b) Tennyson, (c) Dickens, and see what you can gather from them as to the interests, aim, and outlook of each writer. Which most frequently uses as material the common-place things of life such as kettles and doorknobs? Which shows the closest acquaintance with Nature? Which is most concerned with the abstract and the unsubstantial?

19. Write two contrasted pieces of prose or verse, one on Summer and one on Winter.

CHAPTER III

THE VARIETIES OF STYLE

The varieties of style are infinite; all that can be attempted here is to give a brief account of the main groups into which they can be divided, and this can best be done by a rough chronological survey.

It must not, of course, be imagined that one style ever "succeeds" another as night succeeds day in the tropics—"with one stride." Fashions in style, as in dress, change gradually; the new and the old overlap, and there are always some who do not follow the fashion at all. But, however slowly and uncertainly, style does change: any well-read person of average intelligence, given a passage he has never seen before, can guess within a hundred years when it was written.

The most primitive style in the world is the simple-sentence style. Young children use nothing else—"And I met Johnny; and Johnny has a new Teddy; and it squeaks; and he wants me to go to tea with him; and may I, please?" Each idea is given equal prominence, because each is expressed as it arises, without any attempt to connect it formally with what precedes. Now turn to *Genesis*:—

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.

So, too, in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (tenth century):—

At this time Ethelbald the king died. And his body lies at Sherborne. And Ethelbright his brother succeeded to all that kingdom. And in his day a great harrying fleet came up and destroyed Winchester, and Osric the alderman with the men of Hampshire fought against the horde.

And in Malory (fifteenth century):—

Thenne Syr Bedwere departed and wente to the swerde and lyghtly took hit up, and wente to the water syde and there he

bounde the gyrdyl aboute the hyltes, and thenne he threwe the swerde as farre in to the water as he myght, and there cam an arme and an hande above the water and mette it, and caught it, and so shoke it thryse, and braundysshed and then vanysshed awaye the hande wyth the swerde in the water.

Wherever men *begin* to write, they use this style—a style with the minimum of dependent clauses, a style simple and straightforward, each idea being linked with the preceding by *and* or some equivalent.

But it would not be true to say that only the childlike men of early civilisations use it. You will find it in Defoe (1661-1731):—

I understood him in many things, and let him know I was very well pleased with him; in a little while I began to speak to him and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life, and I called him so for the memory of the time; I likewise taught him to say master, and then let him know that was to be my name; I likewise taught him to say yes and no, and to know the meaning of them.

in Tennyson—

The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling broke into flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the hearts of my crew.

in Morris, in Coleridge, in Dickens, in almost all imaginative writing. Why? Because it is the only style which can produce certain effects—naïve simplicity; mediaeval romanticism; plain, direct and vivid narrative; that return to the short, simple sentences of our youth which arises from intense emotion.

There is, however, a considerable difference between the sometimes awkward simplicity of the unpractised hand

and the highly wrought simplicity of the finished artist. No one could mistake the first of the above passages for the work of a modern writer; no one would imagine that the last was written by a beginner.

The very earliest prose makes little use of detail; when an author has to express his ideas laboriously in a language not yet supplied by use for artistic purposes and with fingers unaccustomed to writing, he is content with the more important facts. Indeed, it is probable that, in this early stage of civilisation, he has not learnt to observe minutely: if he describes a battle, he has little to say except that sword clashed against shield and clove the helmets of those doomed to die, while the black raven hovered above.

But at a rather later stage, when the resources of the language have been explored by pioneers and the writer has ready to his hand a whole host of phrases, we find an extreme fondness for detail and, too often, a lack of discrimination in its choice. The poet, with a child's fresh delight in everything, will stop his story to give us a full description of the heroine's dress or the various joints into which the hero divided the deer he had just shot.

The artist who understands his craft knows that a superfluity of irrelevant detail is worse than no detail at all, but the tyro cannot understand that what interests him may bore us. Even Chaucer sometimes sins, though he generally offers a handsome apology! Spenser, coming after changes in the language had thrown back the art of literature almost to the beginning again, has scarcely a glimmering notion of this principle. Any stanza in the *Faerie Queene* is beautiful; but after we have read ten descriptions of the scenery through which the Knight is passing, we grow a little wearied even of beauty.

Given a sense of proportion in the writer, the love of detail is, of course, an advantage. In the hands of Shakespeare and Keats, Gibbon and Macaulay, Tennyson and Rossetti, it adds colour and body without being carried, save in rare cases, to the point of exaggeration. Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve* would lose all its beauty if it were stripped of its detailed descriptions. For this exuberant

delight in small things is of the very stuff of English romanticism—and romanticism sits more easily on our race than classicism. Whenever the nation has renewed its youth, has looked out upon the world with a fresh zest—as in the great Renaissance which culminated under Elizabeth, the romantic revival of the late eighteenth century, the Pre-Raphaelite movement—we find again the concrete rather than the abstract style, the detailed rather than the general.

The mediaeval love of detail, like its Renaissance counterpart, often goes with a love of words for their own sake. The pleasure of Skelton (1460?-1529) as he piles synonym upon synonym:—

Tattered and jagged
Rudely rayne beaten,
Rusty and moughte eaten

the gusto with which Nash ascribes virtue after virtue to the herring, the relish with which Marlowe rolls off proper names, the joy with which Keats, like Spenser before him, resuscitates old words and invents new seem to us more closely akin to 'Rabelais' zest than are the wearisome "lists" in mediaeval poets; but the same spirit informs them all: it is only mastery of the instrument—and our familiarity with the language—that varies.

Another result of this inadequate command of language is the use of stock phrases, little tags—often almost meaningless—to fill up a line or make a rime. When the poet was a minstrel who recited without a manuscript, it is obvious that he would welcome these bits of mechanical speech: while he was saying "I gesse" or "withouten doute," he could be recalling or composing the next line. When the poet ceased to be a minstrel, he still followed the bad tradition.

Perhaps it is the ballad which makes the most lavish use of these conventional fragments, for the literary value

¹ Himself (1483-1553) mediaeval in time, as we count the middle ages in the history of English literature, but Renaissance in spirit and caught in the full tide of the French Renaissance.

of the ballad more than that of any other mediaeval verse form lay in story and situation rather than nicety of expression. For this reason and because of its early connection with dancing, the ballad seems to us the quintessence of mediaeval naïveté. We find, for instance, the peculiar indirectness of statement:—

She hadna been about the King's court
A month, but barely three.

the continual use of repetition in phrase and incident:—

O cherry, cherry was her cheek . . .
And coral, coral was her lips.

the preference of monologue and dialogue to reported speech and, often, to reported action—*Edward, Edward* is dialogue pure and simple; the use of conventional epithets—*bonny son, gowden locks, noble lord*; the rough but vigorous lilt of the ballad metre; the apparent determination to tell everything in the longest possible way, so that, if the hero bids farewell to his wife, his mother, his son, and his two daughters, he does it in five stanzas, almost identical except for the proper names.

All these characteristics make the ballad seem so full of marked oddities that there is little wonder that eighteenth century poets thought ballad-forging the easiest of tasks—little wonder, too, that they proved mistaken. For these are but the external signs; the ballad spirit itself is something more intangible—something at once very young and very old in outlook, simple and sophisticated, like a child trying to imitate a worldly-minded elder, a spirit infinitely far removed from the common-sense, no-nonsense-about-us attitude of the Augustan school of Pope.

You are unlikely to read much outside the styles already treated until you read the Elizabethan period itself, and here you meet not one style but many. Literature, like all the other sides of life, is reborn, looks out upon the world with fresh eyes and, like all young things, is anxious to try experiments.

This is not to say that there were no conventions in verse; much Elizabethan verse is even more conventional than the worst mediaeval allegories with their bloodless personifications of incredibly dull virtues and—still more serious, since they provided the comic relief—incredibly dull vices. But the conventions were different. Spenser, it is true, follows the old tradition; but he fills the old bottles with new wine. He may imagine that his wine is the same as that of the old allegorists—unmatured didacticism, moral edification—but in reality it is the love of all bright and beautiful things. It says much, indeed, for the low ebb to which poetry had sunk, that of the first two great Elizabethan poets one felt the need of writing an elaborate *Defence of Poetry*, and the other felt bound to invent a moral purpose for his pictures of fair maids and bold knights.

For the Spenserian style is the style of a lover of beautiful sights and sounds, rather than that of a thinker of profound thoughts. To illustrate this we have only to consider a typical stanza from the *Faerie Queene*. Take the following, chosen more or less at random:—

The sight of whom, though now decayed and mard,
And eke but hardly seene by candle-light,
Yet, like a Diamond of rich regard,
In doubtfull shadow of the darksome night
With starrie beames about her shining bright,
These marchants fixed eyes did so amaze,
That what through wonder, and what through delight,
A while on her they greedily did gaze,
And did her greatly like, and did her greatly praize.

Here what first strikes us is the easy, unhasting, untiring pace—a pace largely due to the metre. The stanza-form flows on, rime answering and anticipating rime, so that there seems no natural stopping place until we reach the slight backward swirl and pause of the last line. What a contrast with the heroic-couplet of Pope, a form where at the end of every two lines we seem to have reached the end of the poem! But the stanza-form is not

alone responsible for the dallying sweetness of the verse: take a few other lines in the same metre:—

The cock upon the barn-door stretched and crowed.
 The herd-boy in the stable cursed and swore.
 Far in the east the dawn's first redness glowed.
 The milkmaid shivered at the frosty door.
 The air was dank, and grey, and thick and frore.

There is no gentle reverie in that; the sounds are harsh; the clauses are short; the lines are end-stopped; in an unskilful hand, the verse-form has lost all its characteristic beauties. Spenser's work is the reverse of all this; his whole stanza is a single sentence, in which clause melts gently into clause, words glide gently along to form a slow succession of lovely but not striking pictures. The nearest approach to that abrupt use of contrast which constitutes the striking is, as generally in Spenser, the juxtaposition of light and darkness—*doubtfull shadow, darksome night* on the one hand; *candle-light, diamond, and starrie beams* on the other. It is true that Spenser can, when he pleases, paint the grotesque and the horrible; but he so seldom pleases, that his name is always associated with a style full of languorous loveliness.

Thomson, in *The Castle of Indolence*, and Keats are the best-known among those who have learnt Spenser's lesson. Shelley, in *The Revolt of Islam* and *Adonais*, never quite succeeds in catching Spenser's urbane leisureliness—he has too ardent a spirit; Tennyson, though he often (e.g. in *The Palace of Art*) captures Spenser's grace, does not use his metre and has a deeper note; Byron, in *Childe Harold*, by staccato sentences, and an entire lack of Spenser's melody, changes the whole nature of the stanza. For the Spenserian style is the idyllic style, and Spenser is our greater and more Romantic André Chénier—but the André Chénier of the *Idylls*, not that of the *Iambes*; a solemn ecstasy is Spenser's nearest approach to passion.

This lack of passion, this steady contemplation of beauty, this careful artistry was apparently regarded by the Elizabethans as the "correct thing" in verse. Sometimes,

as in Marlow's *Hero and Leander* and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, the dramatist warmed the poet to something more than mere lazy delight in beauty; but the most impassioned lines in the most impassioned poems are cold and artificial besides the human anguish or joy of *Lear* and Middleton's *Changeling*, of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* and Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*—or even of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.

The Elizabethan sonneteers adopt another style—the conventional amorist. Some of them go so far as to borrow both sentiments and phrasing from foreign poets; nearly all of them address similar calmly perfervid appeals to similar inexorable mistresses. The lady's eyes are always stars, her cheeks always roses, her lips always cherries. This is not to say that the resulting poem is bad; often it is a little gem of dainty melody. But its pretence at passion never pretends to be more than a pretence.

In various forms the conventional amorist style is found throughout civilised literature: flirting, the game of making love, is a time-honoured amusement for spare moments; and when once poetry comes to be written by and for those classes which, having abundant leisure, invent a graceful art of love-making, the languishing lover, or his counterpart the gay Lothario, becomes a common figure in verse. Sidney and Campion, Wither and Herrick, Carew and Suckling, even grim Ben Jonson and the savage Landor bring out their lyres and serenade.

But at different times the style takes rather different forms. With the Elizabethans it is generally "conceited," that is to say, a figure of speech, or "conceit," is twisted and turned and squeezed till the last drop of sense is extracted. Thomas Campion's "There is a garden in her face" is a case in point. Here the lady's garden (roses and lilies, with cherry lips) is paradise, while her eyes are the angels keeping guard, and her brows, in lieu of a flaming sword, are bows to kill intruders who would touch the cherries.

"Conceits" were not, of course, confined to love-poems: they are found almost everywhere in Elizabethan verse; Shakespeare's early plays, especially *Richard II.*,

are full of them. But they are most noticeable in the love-poems just because their material was scanty, and the same old notions did duty over and over again. This at length became evident even to the poets themselves, and, by a natural development, we get the Metaphysical Style, which can be said to begin, with Donne's manuscript poems, about 1590, and dragged on a discredited existence till after the Restoration.

The ordinary metaphors and similes had become commonplaces; they were to the man with an imagination what plain, unfigurative speech is to us. When he felt truly poetical, his mind "jumped off" from the ordinary analogies and comparisons to something more remote. Common men could see that Lucasta's cheek was like a rose; your Metaphysical saw in it the red oriflamme of war, that war in which eyes shot arrows at the vanquished swain. For the "conceited" amorist, Celia's eyes might be daggers; for the metaphysical their rays were knitting-needles, weaving the web of men's fate. At his best, the metaphysical poet is sublimely daring, witness Donne's—

Those great fore-fathers of the Church that saw
More in the cloud than we in fire;

at his worst, he is absurd, witness the same poet's—

Hither with crystal vials, lovers, come
And take my tears, which are Love's wine,
And try your mistress' tears at home;
For all are false, that taste not just like mine.

For the weakness of the metaphysical poet was that, when his imagination failed to work, he used his ingenuity instead. And if even a great poet like Donne often sinned, it was only to be expected that the lesser poets—writers without his imagination and without his passion—would copy his worst points and produce a series of cold and ridiculous attempts to surprise.

This is what happened. As we have seen, the value of simile and metaphor consists largely in a nice balance of contrast and similarity. "Behold we put bits in the

horses' mouths . . . But the tongue can no man tame." Here the surprise evoked by the idea of taming a tongue is succeeded by an instantaneous perception that, though horses and tongues seem utterly unlike, there is real similarity between an unbridled horse and an unbridled tongue. The greater the initial sense of incongruity, the more striking the metaphor. But the Metaphysicals too often overload one scale of the balance: the surprise is not followed by a feeling of essential likeness; we feel that such likeness as there may be is forced and superficial.

This extravagance in language, then, lacks the charm of the earlier Elizabethan excesses, because it is less spontaneous. Shakespeare's younger contemporaries had the adolescent tendency to gush and exaggerate, and to this tendency they gave free play in the drama; life to them was so splendid and so strange that even the most "high, astounding terms" were inadequate to express what they felt. Beginning with Marlowe and Kyd, this hyperbolic style remains characteristic of Elizabethan drama to the end. Whenever the dramatist wishes to be particularly impressive, he becomes magniloquent, with a magniloquence sometimes gloriously successful, sometimes it is Shakespeare's—

Techelles, draw thy sword,
And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
And we descend into th' infernal vaults
To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair;

it is Shakespeare's—

Heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.

In truth the Elizabethans had re-discovered the possibilities of language: it is for them no longer a mere mechanical means for the expression of ideas; it is clay to be modelled into quaint shapes, a toy to be played with.

This is as evident in prose as in verse. We get Euphuism (c. 1579-1600) with its elaborate cross-alliteration, its plays on words, its antitheses, its mechanically balanced sentences, its endless comparisons drawn from "unnatural natural history"—

Though Aeneas were too fickle to Dido, yet Troylus was too faithfull to Cressida: though others seem counterfeit in their deeds, yet, Lucilla, persuade yourself, that Euphues will be always current in his dealings.

About the same time we get Arcadianism, with its rather laboured elegance, its compound words, its comparisons of the natural to the artificial (*e.g.* night likened to black velvet), its idyllic pastoralism—

"There were . . . meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs with bleating oratory craved the dams' comfort.

Bacon could and did write (in *The New Atlantis* and elsewhere) a clear unadorned style, but in his essays he, too, shows the Elizabethan tendency to play with—and upon—words. Not, of course, that he is guilty of the eccentricities of Lyly and Sidney. His main characteristics are a laconic brevity, a stately harmony, a full mind, a free use of antithesis, of "conceits," and an abruptness which does not attempt to make a natural transition from one idea to another. Consider, for instance—

For envy is a gadding passion, and walketh the streets, and doth not keep home; ¹*Non est curiosus, quin idem sit malevolus.*

Men of noble birth are noted to be envious towards new men when they rise. For the distance is altered: and it is like a deceit of the eye that, when others come on, they think themselves go back.

¹ There is no busybody that is not evil-disposed.

This epigrammatic style was taken up and modified by the writers of *Characters* (1614 and on), who supplanted it, gave it a more familiar tone, and increased the number and audacity of the conceits, until they came to write what may almost be called metaphysical prose. Thus in Earle we find—

A gallant is one that was born and shapt for his cloathes: and if *Adam* had not falne, had liu'd to no purpose. . . .

A *Cooke*: The Kitchen is his Hell and hee the Divell in it, where his meate and he frye together.

Alongside these and other quaint styles ran an under-current of less eccentric prose. One stream in this under-current was a prose which in vocabulary and in sentence structure owed a great deal to Bacon, but more to Latin—the architectural prose. Here the writer used his words to build great arches and pinnacles of sound. Milton's prose—though Milton often left half-built ruins—was of this order; so was Browne's.

But Browne had in addition much of the subtlety of thought, the odd imagination of the best metaphysical poets. Note in the following the short epigrammatic sentences at first, changing to the steady roll of the trumpet-and-drum peroration—

Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. . . . There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end;—which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself: all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction. . . . But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

Poetry then had become wildly figurative and fantastic; prose had become a kind of unmetrical poetry: the inevitable reaction came. But reaction in art is not the stopping and reversing of an engine: it is the flowing and ebbing of a tide. There is a period of confusion when the tide is on the turn, and, even long before the "turn" itself, there are undercurrents flowing seawards. So the revolt against elaboration and the striving after simplicity is evident here and there long before the Restoration of 1660, just as isolated instances of the old style can be found years after it. But the Restoration may be considered the "turn."

There are several varieties of the Restoration plain style. There is the limpid ease of Waller—

Tobacco is the worst of things, which they
To English landlords, as their tribute, pay.
Such is the mould that the bless'd tenant feeds
On precious fruits, and pays his rent in weeds.

Dryden's verse, masculine and sonorous, often antithetical—

Panting and pensive now she ranged alone,
And wandered in the kingdoms once her own.
The common hunt, though from their rage restrained
By sovereign power, her company disdained,
Grinned as they passed, and with a glaring eye
Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity.

the gentlemanly style of his prose, full of a cultured common sense and an easy mastery of the language—

But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*. We have our forefathers and great-granddames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days.

the racy, familiar, imaginative prose of Bunyan—

After that, he went to the iron gate, for that must be opened too. But that lock went damnably hard; yet the key did open it.

Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but that gate as it opened made such a creaking that it waked Giant Despair, who, hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them.

There is, too, Milton's Grand Style itself, which—though not simple—has the severity and finished outline of Greek architecture. Let us take a short passage in illustration—

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold a surging maze, his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely, never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier.

First, you will notice that he has learnt from Spenser the use of the sentence-paragraph, but that his sentence-paragraph is not, like Spenser's sentence-stanza, a loose-jointed ambling pad: it is a war-horse trained to turn at the least pull of the rein, always stately, always full of fire. Note, too, the variety of pause—a variety partly learnt from the Elizabethan drama in its best days, partly due to his classical studies, but largely the result of his own genius.

Perhaps the next thing observed will be Milton's fondness for Latin-derived words—*addressed*, *indented*, *prone*, *reduntant*—often used in their classical sense rather than in the sense they bear in English. In Milton's hands this adds dignity to the verse, but it is a dangerous method for minor poets, who may easily fall into such depths of bathos as—

Others, destitute
Of real zeal, to every altar bend
By lucre sway'd, and act the basest things
To be styl'd honourable.

Another "trick" of Milton is the "inverted epithet," or the adjective placed after the noun—*inmate bad*. Often too, he will balance his noun between two adjectives—*faded splendour wan*.

All these, of course, are the mere externals of Milton, valuable chiefly because they are the natural expression of his mind. In the eighteenth century there arose a Milton craze; dozens of men who had nothing of the Miltonic mind caught the Miltonic mannerisms. The result was verse full of heavy pomposities, but empty of sublimity, a David strutting round in Saul's armour. Yet, though the poets who wrote Miltonic epics on cider-making or hunting seem ridiculous to us, the revival of interest in the Grand Style influenced for good such poets as Gray and Collins, bringing back to poetry the loftiness of thought, imagery, and diction which it had lost in the age of Pope.

For simplicity, ease, and wit were soon divorced from the force, breadth of outlook, and dignity to which they were wedded in Dryden. Dryden commanded many metres and a multitude of rhythmical effects; Pope, and still more his followers, were never quite at home away from the heroic couplet, and even on that instrument they could play only a few tunes—tunes, too, lacking in orchestration and thin in melody, though at their best delicate and neatly finished. Satirical and semi-satirical matter, too, became more and more popular, the feline softness and sharpness of Pope's couplet being as well suited to his rather hysterical spite as the vigour of Dryden's couplet had been suited to his downright blows and good-humoured contempt.

The same thing was evident in prose. To Dryden's school of sturdy, common-sense, plain English succeeded a still plainer style—the style of Swift. Alongside this was the style of Addison, a style intended for an audience largely composed of "gentlewomen," and coloured throughout by a "gentlewomanly" familiarity and delicacy. In Addison's own hands the effect was delightful; but what in him was a finished artist's ideal of cultured "chat" became in careless hands a prose marked by all the faults of uncultured colloquialism. Sentence-structure

became slipshod, vocabulary unselected, grammatical accuracy itself was neglected, and the conception of the sentence as a phrase in prose-music was entirely lost. All this is not generally true of the greater writers, such as Fielding and Sterne; but it is true of the mass of controversial and periodical writing.

Then, as always, the law of contrast acted again; and we get the Johnsonian style. The Doctor, sturdy classicist as he was, had read widely among the Elizabethans and Jacobeans, and Browne was one of his favourite writers. From Browne and from his own Latin studies, as well no doubt as from the reaction against the prevailing meanness of diction, he caught a fondness for Latin words—the *-osities* and *-ations* which have been so much ridiculed; from Browne and the classics, again, he drew a preference for sentences with a definite rhythmic flow. Unfortunately, the Doctor's ear was not very sensitive, and had, in addition, become too much accustomed to the regular rise and fall of the Popian antithesis and the Popian couplet. So it came to pass that his style was apt to be mechanically balanced and, like himself, rather heavy. But, except when it became a caricature of itself, it was nervous, manly, and forcible, rhetorical in the best sense. Even at its worst, it was a corrective to the prevailing faults of the age.

A characteristic piece of Addison set cheek by jowl with a characteristic piece of Johnson will show how far the pendulum had swung:—

He then renewed his attention, and, from time to time, fell a praising the widow. He made, indeed, a mistake as to one of her pages, whom at his first entering he took for Astyanax; but quickly set himself right in the particular, though, at the same time, he owned he should have been very glad to have seen the little boy, who, says he, must needs be a very fine child by the account that is given of him.

Thus, some make comedy a representation of mean, and others of bad men; some think that its essence consists in the unimportance, others in the fictitiousness of the transaction. But any man's reflections will inform him, that every dramatic composition

which raises mirth is comic; and that, to raise mirth, it is by no means universally necessary that the personages should be either mean or corrupt, nor always requisite that the action should be trivial, nor even that it should be fictitious.

Dr. Johnson was not, of course, the sole early representative of the re-action—Burke brought back some of the old wild audacity of imagination; Gibbon, who owed not a little to Johnson, brought a certain gorgeousness of diction and rhythm and more than the old fullness of thought and learning—but Johnson was by far the most influential. He remained the Dictator in letters, at least as far as Academies for Young Ladies were concerned, till well on into the next century; even Scott not infrequently falls into the veriest Johnsonese, and Macaulay owes most of his characteristic virtues as well as most of his characteristic faults to the Doctor.

By the time Scott died, however, English prose had almost achieved the infinite variety of the Elizabethan period. There was the whimsical style of Lamb, which owed something to many writers—especially to Browne—but yet remained intensely original, allusive, humorous, pathetic, full of quaint imaginings and irrelevant relevancies, a style to which something is owed by almost every subsequent writer of such essays as are primarily works of art.

There is De Quincey's prose-poetry, the parent of Ruskin's purple patch and some sort of a relation to Pater's and Wilde's and Galsworthy's æsthetic styles. It aimed deliberately at introducing into prose the imagination and the magniloquence at that time generally associated only with verse, so that De Quincey thought he had invented a new prose when he wrote—

Vain prayer! Empty adjuration! Profitless rebellion against the laws which season all things for the inexorable grave! Yet not the less we rebel again and again; and, though wisdom counsels resignation, yet our human passions, still cleaving to their object, force us into endless rebellion. . . . Phantoms of lost power, sudden intuitions, and shadowy restorations of forgotten

feelings—sometimes dim and perplexing, sometimes by bright but furtive glimpses, sometimes by a full and steady revelation, overcharged with light—throw us back in a moment upon scenes and remembrances that we have left full thirty years behind us.

There is Landor's style, which aims at the simplicity and finish, the restraint and leisure of Greek art, but avoids the narrowness and artificiality of the eighteenth century pseudo-classic—

Ionia is far more beautiful than Attica, Miletus than Athens; for about Athens there is no verdure, no spacious and full and flowing river, few gardens, many olive-trees, so many indeed that we seem to be in an eternal cloud of dust. However, when the sea-breezes blow, this tree itself looks beautiful; it looks, in its pliable and undulating branches, irresolute as Ariadne when she was urged to fly, and pale as Orithyia when she was borne away.

As complete a contrast to this as can be found is Carlyle's style, grotesque, disjointed, vivid, full of queer compounds and queer words, odd inversions and odder omissions of the less important parts of speech, a style perhaps over-loud, over-emphatic, but thoroughly alive—

Johnson's youth was poor, isolated, hopeless, very miserable. . . . The largest soul that was in all England; and provision made for it of "fourpence-halfpenny a day." . . . Rude, stubborn, self-help here; a whole world of squalor, rudeness, confused misery and want, yet of nobleness and manfulness withal. . . . Very curious how, in that poor Paper-age, so barren, artificial, thick-quilted with Pedantries, Hearsays, the great Fact of this Universe glared in, forever wonderful, indubitable, unspeakable, divine-infernal, upon this man too!

Somewhat akin to Carlyle's style in mastery of the grotesque and in force is Dickens's; but in Dickens's prose there is nothing of the merely eccentric. He gets his effects mainly by an eye for detail, by a vivid interest in everything and everybody, by an imagination which sees odd resemblances—an imagination, indeed, something like that

of the best Metaphysicals—by an almost unparalleled sense of humour and by a gift of exuberant description. Consequently, whereas Carlyle's influence on style has been almost wholly bad—even Meredith learnt as many faults as virtues from him—Dickens has formed a good model for hundreds of beginners and has taught much to many, such as Chesterton, who are not beginners.

Meanwhile a very similar development had been taking place in verse. The Romantic movement began even before the death of Pope; in fact, it is truer to say that the Romantic element never completely died out of English literature, though—under Dryden and Pope—it was temporarily eclipsed. But towards the end of the century the new movement gained force and took on a more clearly defined manner.

As the simple prose of Addison had given place to the pomp of Johnson, so the clear, plain verse of Dryden had given place to the rather stilted "poetic diction" of Gray and of the lesser followers of Milton. But whereas prose writers as a whole made no attempt to return to simplicity, the verse writers, however much they differed in other ways, agreed in a preference for the natural. Burns wrote songs which regain the ease and clearness of Herrick but avoid his courtly artificiality of sentiment; Blake, with the melody and freshness of the Elizabethans, adds an almost childlike note—a suggestion even of the nursery rime; Crabbe describes with painstaking fidelity the sordid realities of life; Wordsworth aims at writing the language of common men. The similarity between these four in this matter is evident:—

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air.

To this day they dwell
In a lonely dell,
Nor fear the wolvish howl
Nor the lion's growl.

Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap;
But none enquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise, that made the stripling stoop,
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold.

Even yet thou art to me
No bird; but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

But this is not the simplicity we have already met; it is neither the simplicity of the unpractised hand nor the highly finished structural simplicity of a Tennyson or a Dickens; it is something between the two—a more or less deliberate discarding of the trappings of verse, an effort to use simple words as well as simple sentences, and to deal with primitive ideas and impressions. The method has its dangers; Burns avoids them, but Blake is sometimes babyish, Crabbe is often dull and ugly, Wordsworth can begin what he thinks an eerie tale with—

Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

a series of commonplaces—chattering teeth, flannel waistcoats, blankets and coats—which provokes a smile.

Indeed, a severely plain style is too narrow even for prose; for poetry it is still more unsuited. The protest, partly conscious, partly unconscious, against the stagey black-velvet-and-tinsel diction of Gray's imitators was necessary; but, when once it had been made effectively, poetry discovered a new, a more natural magnificence.

Keats brought back the Spenserian pictorial power and, in *Hyperion*, the stately march of Milton; Byron, in his

most characteristic work, gave us what is still our best comic verse—

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is: then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair.
The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical;
I don't know what the reason is—the air,
Perhaps; but, as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

where we find quaint rimes (*metaphysical . . . this I call . . . phthisical; shocks . . . orthodox*); a frivolity of sentiment well-matched with frivolity of speech; careless colloquialisms—*neither here nor there, . . . , the truth is . . . I don't know*; and, in the whole poem, and occasionally in a single stanza, abrupt changes from grave to gay, from apparently sincere feeling to a mocking cynicism which denies the existence of any feelings except greed and hatred.

Shelley's style is as abstract and etherial as Byron's is concrete and worldly. He does not give you Keats's mediaeval miniatures, crowded with detail in bright clear colours; he gives you dim, vague, fairy landscapes bathed in opalescent moonlight. If he writes of a skylark, he will compare it to a "poet, hidden in the night of thought," on the well-known educational principle of explaining the familiar by the unfamiliar; he will write you a drama in which figure not only earth but the spirit of earth as well; he will fill you a stanza with abstract ideas—

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing
Leave man, who was a many-sided mirror.

That *has* a "meaning," in the common man's sense of the word—a meaning which can be expressed in plain

prose or translated into another tongue—but it is not this “meaning” that gives the poetry its value; it is, we fear, possible for some lovers of Shelley to read it without catching sight of this “meaning” at all. For the true meaning of poetry is not a constant quantity—its real significance is whatever it means to the reader, all the pictures and ideas, thoughts and dreams, feelings and phantoms which it sets hovering round his head.

Judged by this standard, the Augustan school takes a very low place; judged by this standard Shelley’s poetry ranks with the very greatest in the language—higher even than the bulk of Keats and Tennyson. If you doubt this, apply your “list” test. Saying ten characteristic lines of Shelley, Pope, Keats, and Tennyson over and over to yourself, write down all the ideas which suggest themselves, then compare your four lists. It is safe to say that the Pope list will contain mainly reasonings; in the Keats and Tennyson lists beautiful pictures will predominate; while the Shelley list will be longer, containing besides pictures more unusual and more varied and emotions more intense and more lofty, both reasonings and the less logical and less closely knit kinds of thought.

On succeeding poets Shelley has had a great influence. His use of the abstract to illustrate the concrete, his fondness for lofty rhetoric packed full of thought, as in—

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;

his fairy-like scenery, all helped to mould writers utterly different from him in thought and outlook.

The first two of these characteristics—often, alas! without the rich beauty of melody and image—are found in Matthew Arnold, who thought Shelley ineffectual—though Arnold owes much here to Wordsworth, too—and in Hardy, whose philosophy of life is diametrically opposed to Shelley’s; his fairy note is re-echoed by Beddoes and, with a purely individual touch of grotesque elfin humour, by Walter de la Mare; his swift melody by Tennyson and Swinburne.

Shelley's influence on Tennyson, however, though not slight, was nothing like so strong as that of Keats. Tennyson indeed has many styles, only one of which perhaps is sufficiently new and sufficiently important to mention here. This is the new scientific-detailed style. The old poets who used detail would describe things familiar to all—rooks flying home at sunset, pink-tipped daisies studding the meadow, the dewdrops hanging on the morning grass: Tennyson used unfamiliar detail—he studied Nature with the scientist's exactitude,

More black than ash-buds in the front of March

he will say; and we go out into the garden to discover with surprise that ash-buds in March *are* black.

This new realism has developed much since Tennyson's day. It is no longer a mere realism in the description of beautiful natural objects; it has incorporated the sordid realism of Crabbe, but it has not left it merely sordid—it makes it vivid, secret, exciting, even beautiful. There is nothing beautiful about Quilp in real life, but Dickens's Quilp gives us the same romantic thrill as Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

Browning is the first poet of importance to adopt this style. No one could call *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* merely ugly, merely grotesque, merely romantic. It has a queer individual beauty, and it is as full of realism as of improbability. Browning, like Swift before him, though without Swift's "classical" imperturbability, writes of the impossible as if it were matter-of-fact; you have only to think what the story would have become in Poe's hands or Maeterlinck's or Walter de la Mare's to grasp the difference between romantic realism and pure romanticism.

Browning's realism is many-sided, not a mere choice of realistic detail. It is above all realism in the expression of thought. Browning, except where his learning leads him to make obscure allusions, is not difficult to understand when once you have the key to his strangeness. We all write as we think English should be written or, if we have not reached those heights, as we speak: Browning writes

as he thinks. There is a vast gulf between the two: our mental processes are not entirely logical, not entirely complete, certainly not rounded into syntactical perfection. We get a half-glimpse of an idea and then, before we have time to examine it thoroughly, it changes with kaleidoscopic rapidity into something else. Nor are our thoughts bare intellectual things; they are obscurely tinged with feelings, prejudices, instincts, of which we ourselves are often only half-conscious. Browning made it his business first of all to become more fully conscious of the contents of his own or his characters' mind, and then to express his new knowledge in the abrupt, colloquial style natural to those who are thinking aloud. Browning's Bishop Blougram, for instance, speaks in this way of the voyage of life—

You peep up from your utterly naked boards
Into some snug and well-appointed berth,
Like mine, for instance (try the cooler jug—
Put back the other, but don't jog the ice)
And mortified you mutter "Well and good—
He sits enjoying his sea-furniture—
'Tis stout and proper, and there's store of it,
Though I've the better notion, all agree,
Of fitting rooms up!"

Our acquaintance with bishops may not be sufficient for us to determine whether this is how they talk; but—except for an imaginative knack of metaphor not too common—it is very much how ordinary folk talk, breaking off their argument to offer refreshment, going on again unperturbed with colloquial turns of speech, with a little sarcastic half-smile at "mine, for instance," with a broader smile—to take out the sting—as he half-accuses his guest of "swank."

To make such a passage intelligible to the hearer what is necessary above all is to get the expression right, to emphasise this word, throw a half-laugh into that hint, a question in a third—to read it with the very tone and gesture of natural and unrestrained speech.

Browning did not take the process to its logical conclusion; his work is necessarily a compromise, but it is a

compromise much nearer to "standard" English than the work of Meredith or of Henry James. These analyse more minutely, record more exactly, hedge, qualify their statements, explain with conscientious particularity what their heroine thought at 5.56 and what she was beginning to think at 5.57; they reproduce faithfully the half-sentences, the hints and shrugs of talk between quick-witted and sensitive modern people. Consider this passage from Meredith's *One of Our Conquerors*—

She begged a day's delay; which would enable her, she said, to join them in dining at the Blachington's, and seeing dear Lakelands again. "I was invited, you know." She spoke in childish style, and under her eyes she beheld her father and mother exchange looks. He had a fear that Nataly might support the girl's petition. Nataly read him to mean possible dangers among the people at Wrensham. She had seemed hesitating. After meeting Victor's look, her negative was firm. She tried to make it one of distress for the use of the negative to her own dear girl. Nesta spied beneath.

That gives us the essence of a fairly long conversation between three people; yet only two speak, and of these one says only "No." The rest of the conversation consists of looks and thoughts.

This, then, is the new cryptic style, an application to thought and speech of the new realism hitherto kept for concrete externalities. Side by side with it, the realism of description continues, borrowing some of its neighbour's economy of words. The verbless sentence, already not uncommon in Dickens, becomes frequent. Sinclair Lewis can write:—

Under the rolling clouds of prairie a moving mass of steel. An irritable clank and rattle beneath a prolonged roar. The sharp scent of oranges cutting the soggy smell of unbathed people and ancient baggage.

Towns are planless as a scattering of pasteboard boxes on an attic floor. The stretch of faded gold stubble broken only by clumps of willows encircling white houses and red barns.

Bart Kennedy and a crowd of minor impressionistic writers can go even further than this in the simplification of language, and write a prose almost entirely composed of disconnected nouns and adjectives with a few infinite parts of verbs.

Still bolder, the futurist writer disintegrates the language completely, using mathematical and musical signs, dispensing with stops, inventing onomatopoeic words, writing, say, to represent a child falling and being comforted:—

Father and child (tb-tb tb-tb) plomp plomp kersquosh boo-hoo
> hoo ps ps boo > smile.

This, he may tell us, is poetry. But where, you may ask, is the metre? He will tell you that metre is a fetter, a convention, with which he has nothing to do. Long before the ultra-modernist invented a language of his own, the revolt against metrical form had begun—a revolt headed by the great American poet, Walt Whitman. But these writers of free verse did not despise rhythm itself; what they wrote was a highly rhythmical, cadenced prose, generally though not always arranged in verse lines to match the cadences.

Though some of us may prefer regular verse or a less mannered prose, we cannot to-day honestly deny the beauty of much of this work. So it is possible that our grandchildren may find beauty even in Futurism, just as our ancestors found beauty in woad-stencilled faces.

The realistic school, then, appears to have gone, in its jazz discords, as far as it is possible for it to go. But it has not killed the aesthetic school. It is a feature of the last century that, alongside the attempt to reproduce with fidelity its ugliness and grotesqueness there was always, in strong contrast, an attempt to reduce all life to sheer beauty. As Browning was the head and fount of modern realism, so Tennyson was the father of modern aestheticism, the aestheticism which does not, as did Keats, exclude "unpoetical" subjects, which does not necessarily (as did Keats) ignore "moral purpose" in the interests of art, but which consciously or unconsciously places art first.

Some of the Pre-Raphaelite group, indeed, were immensely interested in politics and in economics—William Morris was even a capable business-man—but their first aim was to bring back to English style the intricate detail, the simplicity of drawing and colouring characteristic of painting before Raphael. Morris himself had a peculiar fondness for the Anglo-Saxon element in the English language; he resuscitated many dead words, coined others, and with much ingenuity succeeded in writing pages of prose quite free from Latin-derived words. At its best his prose and verse are like a clear, gently-flowing stream in green English fields; at its worst they have something of the insipidity and monotony of a trickle from the tap.

His friend D. G. Rossetti depended for his effect mainly upon richness of detail and of colouring; he is the Burne Jones of literature, indeed many of his poems are little more than descriptions of a picture or related series of pictures. Thus two or three pictures—or two or three stained glass windows—could give us almost the whole content of "The Blessèd Damozel": we should see her first standing at the gold bar of Heaven eagerly looking down for her lover; a second picture would show her again, with the gathering shadow of weary disappointment on her face; the third would show her, head dropped on hands, in tears; round the borders miniatures would give the substance of the stanzas in which she imagines herself wandering with him.

If Rossetti is the painter and sculptor in verse, Swinburne is the musician. His use of alliteration (see page 14) is only the most obvious element in a complex harmony, a swift rush and clangour of wonderful sound. Swinburne has had an enormous influence over the eager, passionate section of modern aesthetes, Fitzgerald over the languid, fatalistic section.

In prose, Ruskin, Pater, Stevenson, Wilde among the elder men, Galsworthy and Masefield among the younger, are perhaps the most prominent. But if, especially in the later of these writers, realism is made to serve the purposes of aestheticism, in Yeats and several others of the Irish school unreality is put to the same use. We have strange,

dim, remote figures from another world; unfamiliar birds, shadowy trees—and all these are vague symbols of ideas, spiritual realities which lie beyond and behind them. The weirdness is increased by the contrast with an occasional Irish—and therefore to English readers not entirely real—realism, and by the use of an Irish mythology still not very familiar to English readers. Take, for instance, the following from *The Player Queen*—

Leave me to die alone? I do not blame you. There is courage in red wine, in white wine, in beer, even in thin beer sold by a blear-eyed potboy in a bankrupt tavern, but there is none in the human heart. When my master the Unicorn bathes by the light of the Great Bear, and to the sound of Tabors, even the sweet river-water makes him drunk; but it is cold, it is cold, alas! it is cold.

Here we begin with a statement as intelligible as need be—that all courage is “Dutch courage”—expressed in a limpid, rhythmical prose which makes even the blear-eyed potboy beautiful. But, passing from the realism of the bankrupt tavern, we seem to step into another world—a fairy world in which mystic Unicorns bathe to the sound of tabors. The swiftness of the transition, the strangeness of the contrast fill the reader with a sense of the uncanny, of another world; secret and beautiful, remote from ours and yet close around it—or, if he be a scoffer, with a wild laughter.

For it is not merely the mad, the sick, and the drunken who speak so; this is the common speech of common men. It is the method of *Alice in Wonderland* refined, etherialised, and applied to serious purposes.

Alongside the new aestheticism—and, indeed, often combined with it—we find a new intellectualism, a kind of cross between the wit of the old Restoration Comedy and of Sheridan, and the attempts of Arnold, both in prose and verse, to think systematically, to make a cultured reason the final arbiter in all human problems. This new interest in the things of the mind takes many forms; in Wilde it is brilliant, superficial, epigrammatic—

“The ancient historians gave us delightful fiction in the form of fact; the modern novelist presents us with dull facts under the

guise of fiction. . . . Many a young man starts in life with a natural gift for exaggeration which, if nurtured in congenial and sympathetic surroundings, or by the imitation of the best models, might grow into something really great and wonderful. But, as a rule, he comes to nothing. He either falls into careless habits of accuracy——”

CYRIL. My dear fellow!

VIVIAN. Please don't interrupt in the middle of a sentence. “He either falls into careless habits of accuracy, or takes to frequenting the society of the aged and the well-informed. . . . I quite admit that modern novels have many good points. All I insist on is that, as a class, they are quite unreadable.”

Here the effort to be clever is as evident as the effort to write beautifully. The frequent, but not too frequent, antithesis; the air of nonchalant matter-of-fact with which such well-worn phrases as “careless habits of inaccuracy” are given an entirely unexpected turn; the way in which the dialogue-form is used to emphasise the writer's wit—lest a reader who has not yet fallen into careless habits of accuracy should miss the point—Vivian's own deliberate artistry, which cannot endure an interruption of the rhythmic flow of his artfully balanced sentence—all these are marks of the intellectual-aesthetic style.

Now let us turn to Shaw's *Preface to Androcles and the Lion*—

It seems therefore that we must begin by holding the right to an income as sacred and equal, just as we now begin by holding the right to life as sacred and equal. Indeed, the one right is only a restatement of the other. To hang me for cutting a dock labourer's throat after making much of me for leaving him to starve when I do not happen to have a ship for him to unload is idiotic; for as he does far less mischief with his throat cut than when he is starving, a rational society would esteem the cut-throat more highly than the capitalist.

or, for his dialogue style, to his *Man and Superman*—

OCTAVIUS. I believe most intensely in the dignity of labour.

STRAKER (*unimpressed*). That's because you never done any, Mr. Robinson. My business is to do away with labour. You'll

get more out of me and a machine than you will out of twenty labourers and not so much to drink either.

The style in both cases is hard, bright, clever, appearing at times to cover an earnest purpose with a cloak of buffoonery. There is nothing of Wilde's semi-poetic phrases, there is no attempt at "fine writing"; this prose is clear, nervous, entirely devoid of conventional literary turns, full of illustrations drawn from the plain man's experience, full of statements which strike one at first sight as—to use his own colloquial phrase—"idiotic," but which prove on closer examination to enshrine a serious idea.

In many ways, then, Shaw recalls Swift—but a sharper-witted Swift with less depth of emotion. Note, too, his realistic representation of modern uncultured speech—its neglect of syntax and its downright conciseness and clarity. Chesterton's prose, another example of the new intellectualism, we have already considered.

But perhaps the most striking illustration of the extent to which reason sways the modern writer is to be found, not in drama and not in the essay, but in the novel. By their very form the play and the essay adapt themselves to the development of a thesis, but the novel from its beginning was essentially a story told for amusement, not instruction. Throughout its history it had been a loose mould into which the author could pour characterisation, episode, descriptive writing, philosophising—anything, in short, which occurred to him, provided only that what he wrote was interesting. But in these last days has appeared the novel with an idea—the problem novel, as it is sometimes inaccurately called. Galsworthy will write a trilogy—with a few shorter afterthoughts—on the development in the last century of the Man of Property type, the acquisitive Englishman, almost completely materialist in practice if not in theory, anxious only to "get on" and to possess; Wells will write novel after novel to illustrate the need of a wiser education, a more carefully trained race. More and more the novelist gets his material not from life but from that cubist reflection of life—the psychological treatise;

novelist after novelist will attack the abuses of the time—the growth of trusts, Press monopolies, patent-medicine fortunes, and so on—making their attack not, as Dickens did, a part, however large a part, of a novel, but constructing the whole of his novel round the one central idea.

As a natural consequence, the style of the novel is profoundly modified: the old “once-upon-a-time” narrative manner has largely disappeared. Contrast, for instance, with the first lines of a novel by Dickens or Thackeray or of a modern “yarn-teller” like De Morgan or Conrad the opening of Wells’s *The Research Magnificent*—

THE PRELUDE.

On Fear and Aristocracy.

The story of William Porphyry Benham is the story of a man who was led into adventure by an idea. It was an idea that took possession of his imagination quite early in life, it grew with him and changed with him, it interwove at last completely with his being.

and so on for some pages. Could anything be less suggestive of an interest in the story as a story. This new style is above all explanatory: it is concerned to make you understand the writer’s purpose and point of view; it is carefully and deliberately reasonable.

Perhaps the extreme example of the way in which the modern has become self-conscious is to be found in J. M. Barrie. To many a casual reader he is an amusing sentimentalist or a “dear man, so funny and so pathetic”—nothing more. But very little consideration is enough to convince us that Barrie is by no means a mere sentimentalist: he is possessed of an ironic insight as clear as Hardy’s: he has learnt the lesson of Ibsen’s *Wild Duck* that even harmful illusions may be better for the weak than no illusions at all. If we only realised it, he says in effect, most of our emotions are factitious and theatrical; Mr. Darling will take delight in parading his repentance long after he has ceased to be sorry; Sentimental Tommy will bear himself as a hero suffering agonies when he has merely *imagined* that his ankle is injured; when Mary Rose

comes back to her heart-broken father, he wishes she had stayed away; your journalist will make of his deepest agonies material for humorous copy; only mother-love is real—and yet Peter Pan's mother shuts him out when she gets another child. Barrie's style matches his thought—he is perhaps of all our modern writers the most consciously artistic, the most capable of getting from a single phrase or even a single word a whole complicated world of thought-shot emotion. There are traces of this even in his early novel *Better Dead*—

Andrew is now a staunch Conservative. Domesticated and repentant, he has renounced the devil and all her works. Sometimes, when thinking of the past, the babble of his lovely babies jars upon him, and, still half-dreaming, he brings their heads close together.

At such a time all the anxious mother has to say is—
“ Andrew ! ”

Then with a start he lays them gently in a heap on the floor, and, striding the room, soon regains his composure.

Note here the sly humour in the devil's change of sex, the gentle under-statement in “ knocks their heads together ”—“ drops them ” would entirely spoil the passage—the half-mockery of the semi-poetical alliteration in “ babble of his lovely babies.”

And—perhaps as one more unconscious expression of the universal desire for contrast—we get, alongside this extremely self-conscious, extremely sophisticated prose, the childlike songs of such modern lyrists as Ralph Hodgson—songs whose style has affinities both with the Elizabethans and with Blake.

In our time, indeed, something of the great variety of style evident in the Elizabethan period is again apparent: whether our new heterogeneity will be followed by the narrowness of a new classicism remains to be seen.

But if, among the many highly individual styles in our highly individual literature, lack of space has compelled the neglect of many great names, there is one style, associated with no great name, which cannot be overlooked, so

characteristic of our age is it—the Journalistic style. It has its origin in the conditions of the modern press, conditions which oblige hundreds of people to write at great speed in an arresting manner of matters of which they are more or less ignorant. The more skilful and better educated of these hundreds often produce a style which differs from good plain English prose mainly in a heightening of the contrasts of light and shade, an avoidance of all “heavy” reading, and a stressing of the “human element”; the less skilful try to make up by a pontifical manner, and a bastard Johnsonese for their consciousness of ignorance, to save time and thought by the use of outworn phrases, and to arrest and startle by crude, over-coloured descriptions. If they lack proper training, they add grammatical blunders to their other faults. So we may get would-be fine writing of this kind:—

The approaching festival at the Little Applington Village Hall will, we can assure our readers with the greatest confidence, surpass all expectations. Constable Smith, our feared and revered man in blue, will be there, arrayed in official panoply, and will give a recitation from one of the deathless works of the immortal Swan of Avon; Miss Smith, who will wear a wonderful creation in *soie de choux* and *crêpe-de-chine*, and which will rouse the envy of all beholders, will give a vocal performance of the first water; and the Reverend Paisley, full of the milk of human kindness, will again bless our proceedings with his fatherly smile.

EXERCISE III.

1. Attempt a classification of the following passages as (a) ornate, (b) simple.

2. Which of the following extracts do you consider appeal primarily to (a) your feelings, (b) your sense of beauty, (c) your sense of humour, (d) your mind? Give reasons for your opinion.

3. Consider each of the following extracts and say to which variety or varieties of style mentioned in Chapter III. you assign it. Give your reasons. If you think it represents a variety not mentioned there, describe its style.

4. Arrange the following extracts in what you consider their approximate chronological order.

1. It was his luxurious custom to shave while sitting snugly in a tubful of hot water. He may be viewed to-night as a plump, smooth, pink, baldish, podgy goodman, robbed of the importance of spectacles, squatting in breast-high water, scraping his lather-smear'd cheeks with a safety-razor like a tiny lawn-mower, and with melancholy dignity clawing through the water to recover a slippery and active piece of soap.

2. A sea-bird, cackling like a devil, spoke
And the fog drew away and hung like lead:
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red,
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,
And sometimes drew away and then drew near. 5

Like islands and like chasms and like hell,
But always mighty and red, gloomy and ruddy,
Shutting the visible sea in like a wall,
Slow-heaving in vast ripples blank and muddy
Where the sun should have risen it streaked bloody. 10

3. Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!
"Toward that patch of brown;
Direction left." Bullets a stream
Devouring thought crying in a dream.
Men, crumpled, going down 5
Go on. Go.
Deafness, Numbness, The loudening tornado.
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.
My voice's strangled shout:
"Steady pace, boys!" 10

4. Babel Tower, with the confusion of tongues, were not Bedlam added with the conflagration of thoughts, was no type of it. One forest of distracted steel bristles, endless, in front of an Electoral Committee; points itself, in horrid radii, against this and the other accused breast. It was the Titans warring with Olympus; and they, scarcely crediting it, have *conquered*; prodigy of prodigies; delirious,—as it could not but be. Denunciation, vengeance, blaze of triumph on a dark ground of terror; all

outward, all inward things fallen into one general wreck of madness!

5. Cranes and gaudy parrots go
 Up and down the burning sky;
 Tree-top cats purr drowsily
 In the dim-day green below;
 And troops of monkeys, nutting, some, 5
 All disputing, go and come;
 And things abominable sit
 Picking offal buck or swine,
 On the mesh and over it
 Burnished flies and beetles shine, 10
 And spiders big as bladders lie
 Under hemlocks ten foot high.

6. A paradoxical writer like Bernard Shaw is perpetually and tiresomely told that he stands on his head. But all romance and all religion consist in making the whole universe stand on its head. That reversal is the whole idea of virtue; that the last shall be first and the first last.

7. Jack was quite as much a part of the village as the church spire;
 And if any of us lazied along by the river in the dusk of the evening—
 Waving aside nebulae of gnats,
 Turning head quickly at the splash of a jumping fish,
 Peering where the water chuckled over a vanishing water-rat—
 And saw not Jack's familiar form bending over his lines,
 And smelt not his vile shag,
 We should feel a loneliness, a vague impression that something was wrong.

8. In fact, a sense of something whimsical in their companionship seems to have taken entire possession of his rude brain. The bare fact of being patronised by a great man whom he could have crushed with one hand, appeared in his eyes so eccentric and humorous, that a kind of ferocious merriment gained the mastery over him, and quite subdued his brutal nature. He roared and roared again; toasted Mr. Tappertit a hundred times; declared himself a Bull-dog to the core; and vowed to be faithful to him to the last drop of blood in his veins.

9. Beneath me in the valley waves the palm.
Beneath, beyond the valley, breaks the sea;
Beneath me sleep in mist and light and calm
Cities of Lebanon, dream-shadow-dim,
Where Kings of Tyre and Kings of Tyre did rule 5
In ancient days in endless dynasty,
And all around the snowy mountains swim
Like mighty swans afloat in heaven's pool.

10. Darkness had gathered; the moon was rising; over the door the reflections of those old boar-spears branched sharp and long on the pale wall; they had an uncanny look, like cross-bones. How those two fellows disliked each other! Whole centuries of antagonism glared out of their eyes. They seemed to sum up in some mysterious way all that's significant and opposed in the artist and the man of action. . . . One represented a decent well-fed spirit of satisfaction with things as they are, and the other a ravening shade, whom centuries of starvation had engrained with strife.

11. Barbary and her husband away before us. We stayed till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long: it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire, and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruin.

So home with a sad heart, and there find everybody discoursing and lamenting the fire; and poor Tom Hater came with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which was burned upon Fish Street Hill.

12. They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the
morn,
From temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in
scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the
sea
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be;
On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl,
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the
ground,—
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.

13. And the wandering of many roads hath made my eyes
As dark red circles filled with dust.

Yet there is a trembling upon me in the twilight,

And little red elf words crying "A song,"

Little grey elf words crying for a song,

Little brown leaf words crying "A song,"

Little green leaf words crying for a song.

The words are as leaves, old brown leaves in the spring time
Blowing they know not whither, seeking a song.

5

14. I saw them in my dream, so far as this valley reached, there was on the right hand a very deep ditch; that ditch is it into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and have both there miserably perished. Again, behold on the left hand there was a very dangerous quag, in which if even a good man falls he finds no bottom for his foot to stand on. Into that quag King David once did fall, and had no doubt therein been smothered, had not he that is able plucked him out.

15. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

16. He could distinguish, and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute:
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl,
A calf an alderman, a goose a justice,
And rooks committee men and trustees.
He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination.

5

10

17. The crystal springs whose taste illuminates
Refined eyes with an eternal sight,
Like tried silver run through Paradise
To entertain divine Zenocrate:
The cherubims and holy seraphins, 5
That sing and play before the King of Kings
Use all their voices and their instruments
To entertain divine Zenocrate;
And, in this sweet and curious harmony,
The god that tunes this music to our souls 10
Holds out his hand in highest majesty
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

18. Air shudders with shrill spears crossing, and hurtling of
wheels that roar.
As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of a lion that foam as they
gnash
Is the shriek of the axles that loosen, the shock of the poles that
crash.
The dense manes darken and glitter, the mouths of the mad
steeds champ,
Their heads flash blind through the battle, and death's foot rings
in their tramp.

19. Sad is the day, and worse must follow, when we hear the
blackbird in the garden, and do not throb with joy. But, Leofric,
the high festival is strown by the servant of God upon the heart of
man. It is gladness, it is thanksgiving; it is the orphan, the
starveling, pressed to the bosom, and bidden as its first command-
ment to remember its benefactor. We will hold this festival; the
guests are ready; we may keep it up for weeks, and months, and
years together, and always be the happier and the richer for it.
The beverage of this feast, O Leofric, is sweeter than bee or flower
or vine can give us: it flows from heaven; and in heaven will it
abundantly be poured out again to him who pours it out here
abundantly.

20. My lords, if you must fall, may you so fall! But if you
stand, and stand I trust you will, together with the fortune of this
ancient monarchy—together with the ancient laws and liberties of
this great and illustrious kingdom—may you stand as unimpeached
in honour as in power; may you stand not as a substitute for

virtue, but as an ornament of virtue, as a security for virtue; may you stand long, and long stand the terror of tyrants; may you stand the refuge of afflicted nations; may you stand a sacred temple, for the perpetual residence of an inviolable justice,

21. The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation,—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds.

22. Envy the next, Envy with squinted eyes;
Sick of a strange disease, his neighbour's health;
Best lives he then when any better dies,
Is never poor but in another's wealth,
On best men's harms and griefs he feeds his fill, 5
Else his own maw doth eat with spiteful will.
Ill must the temper be, where diet is so ill.

23. A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high 5
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest, 10
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?

24. And as Night's chariot through the air was driven,
Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the woods; no warbling tongue
Talked to the echo; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance. 5
Only the curled streams soft chidings kept,
And little gales that from the green leaf swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearful whisperings stirred
As loath to waken any singing bird.

25. We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to those woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.—Hail candlelight! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindest luminary of the three—if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candlelight. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet.

26. The consternation of Gaul was universal; and the various fortunes of its cities have been adorned by tradition with martyrdoms and miracles. Troyes was saved by the merits of St. Lupus; St. Servatius was removed from the world, that he might not behold the ruin of Tongres; and the prayers of St. Genevieve diverted the march of Attila from the neighbourhood of Paris. But as the greatest part of the Gallic cities were alike destitute of saints and soldiers, they were besieged and stormed by the Huns; who practised, in the example of Metz, their customary maxims of war.

27.

To Israel

Honour hath left and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this 5
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail,
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair, 10
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

28. Does he really think of making us enamoured of the "good old times" by the faithful and harrowing portraits he has drawn of them? Would he carry us back to the early stages of barbarism, of clanship, of the feudal system, as a "consummation devoutly to be wished"? Is he infatuated enough, or does he so doat and drivel over his own slothful and self-willed prejudices, as to believe that he will make a single convert to the beauty of Legitimacy, that is, of lawless power and savage bigotry, when he himself is obliged to apologise for the horrors he describes, and even render his descriptions credible to the modern reader by referring to the authentic history of these delectable times?

29. Next him was Feare, all arm'd from top to toe,
 Yet thought himselfe not safe enough thereby,
 But feard each shadow moving to and fro;
 And his owne armes when glittering he did spy,
 Or slashing heard, he fast away did fly, 5
 As ashes pale of hew, and wingy heeld;
 And evermore on Daunger fixt his eye,
 'Gainst whom he alwaies bent a brazen shield
 Which his right hand unarmed fearefully did wield.

30. Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
 Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
 And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
 Long after fearing to creep forth again;
 So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled 5
 Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

31. Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
 Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
 Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
 And do not drop in for an after-loss:
 Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow, 5
 Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe,
 Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
 To linger out a purposed overthrow.
 If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
 When other petty griefs have done their spite, 10
 But in the onset come; so shall I taste
 At first the very worst of fortune's might,
 And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
 Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

— Shakespeare

32. Upon the roof the bird of sorrow sat
Elonging joyful day with his sad note,
And through the shady air the fluttering bat
Did wave her leather sails and blindly float;
While with her wings the fatal screech-owl smote 5
Th' unblest house; there on a craggy stone
Celeno hung, and made his direful moan
And all about the murdered ghosts did shriek and groan.

33. Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
Which for the colours did excel,
The fair Queen Mab becoming well
So lively was the limning;
The seat the soft wool of the bee 5
The cover, gallantly to see,
The wing of a pied butterfly;
I trow 'twas simple trimming.

34. In the first place, therefore, I thankfully acknowledge to the Almighty power the assistance He has given me in the beginning, the prosecution, and conclusion of my present studies, which are more happily performed than I could have promised to myself, when I laboured under such discouragements. For what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after-ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood.

35. There's a bell in Moscow,
While on tower and kiosk O!
In Saint Sophia
The Turkman gets,
And loud in air 5
Calls men to prayer
From the tapering summits
Of tall minarets.

36. Oh how very sad I am
In my heart of hearts!
Like bleats from a lamb
The tear from my wet eye starts.

Down my face it runs.
 Still I weep and cry,
 While suns after suns
 Shine up in the bright blue sky.

5

37. May my dreams be granted never?
 Must I aye endure affliction
 Rarely realised, if ever,
 In our wildest works of fiction?
 Madly Romeo loved his Juliet,
 Copperfield began to pine
 When he hadn't been to school yet,
 But their loves were cold to mine.

5

38. What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence, had their victories as great, joy as just and as unbounded; and, with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some: the sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

39. Passing through Tokenhouse-yard in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, "O death, death, death!" in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street; neither did any other window open; for people had no curiosity now in any case; nor could anybody help one another; so I went on into Bell-alley.

40. Who has no minute's breathing space allow'd
 To nurse his dwindling faculty of joy:—
 Joy and the outward world must die to him
 As they are dead to me.
 And you, ye Stars!
 Who slowly begin to marshal,
 As of old, in the fields of heaven,
 Your distant, melancholy lines—
 Have you, too, survived yourselves?
 Are you, too, what I fear to become?
 You, too, once lived—

5

10

41. His wife received, the patriarch re-baptised him,
(He made the church a present, by the way),
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrowed the Count's smallclothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him, 5
Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories—but *I* don't believe the half of them.
42. O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light
That holds the hot sky tame,
And the steady fore-foot snores through the planet-powder'd floors,
Where the scared whale flukes in flame!
Her plates are scarr'd by the sun, dear lass, 5
And her ropes are taut with the dew,
For we're booming down on the old trail, our own trail, the out
trail,
We're sagging south on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new.
43. But they thought the want of moral virtues was so far from
being supplied by superior endowments of the mind, that employ-
ments could never be put into such dangerous hands as those of
persons so qualified; and at least, that the mistakes committed by
ignorance, in a virtuous disposition, would never be of such fatal
consequence to the public weal, as the practices of a man whose
inclinations led him to be corrupt, and who had great abilities to
manage, to multiply, and defend, his corruptions.
44. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of
envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every
inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents
upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see
the tombs of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of
grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings
lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits
placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with
their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment
on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind.
When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died
yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great
day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our
appearance together.

45. I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air;
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped, grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms, more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

46. But while he passed before a plashy place,
A lug-worm with its gray and muddy mouth
Sang how somewhere to north or west or south
There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race;
And how beneath those three times blessed skies 5
A Danaan fruitage makes a shower of moons,
And as it falls awakens leafy tunes:
And at that singing he was no more wise.

47. No tender-hearted garden crowns,
No bosomed woods adorn
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
But gnarled and writhen thorn—
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim, 5
And through the gaps revealed
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim
Blue goodness of the Weald.

48. Him Phoebus, lending to darkness colour and form
Of light's excess, many lessons and counsels gave;
Showed Wisdom lord of the human intricate swarm,
And whence prophetic it looks on the hives that rave;
And how acquired, of the zeal of love to acquire, 5
And whence it stands, in the centre of life a sphere;
And Measure, mood of the lyre, the rapturous lyre,
He said was Wisdom, and struck him the notes to hear.

49. Raise me a daïs of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;

Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me. 5

50. Venice seems a type
Of life—'twixt blue and blue extends, a stripe,
As Life, the somewhat, hangs 'twixt nought and nought;
'Tis Venice, and 'tis Life—as good you sought
To spare me the Piazza's slippery stone 5
Or keep me to the unchoked canals alone,
As hinder Life the evil with the good
Which make up Living, rightly understood.

51. Circle-wise sit they, with bound locks
And bosoms coverèd;
Into the fine cloth, white like flame,
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them 5
Who are just born, being dead.

52. Here is Salome. She is a young tree
Swaying in the wind; her arms are slender branches,
And the heavy summer leafage of her hair
Stirs as if rustling in a silent wind;
Her narrow feet are rooted in the ground, 5
But, when the dim wind passes over her,
Rustling she awakens, as if life
Thrilled in her body to its finger tips.

53. We listen'd and look'd sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seem'd to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleam'd white; 5
From the sails the dew did drip.

54. Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat convey'd!
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old and she a shade.

55. And those who husbanded the golden grain
 And those who flung it to the winds like Rain
 Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
 As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

56. As on an Alpine watch-tower
 From heaven comes down the flame,
 Full on the neck of Titus
 The blade of Aulus came:
 And out the red blood spouted, 5
 In a wide arch and tall,
 As spouts a fountain in the court
 Of some rich Capuan's hall.

57. No nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands:
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard 5
 In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.
 Will no one tell me what she sings?—
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow 10
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago.

58. The actors in the old tragedies, as we read, piped their iambs to a tune, speaking from under a mask, and wearing tilts and a great head-dress. 'Twas thought the dignity of the Tragic Muse required these appurtenances, and that she was not to move except to a measure and cadence. So Queen Medea slew her children to a slow music: and King Agamemnon perished in a dying fall (to use Mr. Dryden's words): the Chorus standing by in a set attitude, and rhythmically and decorously bewailing the fates of those great crowned persons. The Muse of History hath encumbered herself with ceremony as well as her Sister of the Theatre.

59. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all

had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man.

60. And Verona possesses, in the last place, the loveliest Renaissance architecture of Italy, not disturbed by pride, nor defiled by luxury, but rising in fair fulfilment of domestic service, serenity of effortless grace, and modesty of home seclusion: its richest work given to the windows that open on the narrowest streets and most silent gardens. All this she possesses, in the midst of natural scenery such as assuredly exists nowhere else in the habitable globe—a wide Alpine river foaming at her feet, from whose shore the rocks rise in a great crescent, dark with cypress, and misty with olive: illimitably, from before her southern gates, the tufted plains of Italy sweep and fade in golden light; around her, north and west, the Alps crowd in crested troops, and the winds of Benacus bear to her the coolness of their snows.

61. When she found herself abroad and in the open fields, additional subjects of apprehension crowded upon her. The dim cliffs and scattered rocks, interspersed with green sward, through which she had to pass to the place of appointment, as they glimmered before her in a clear autumn night, recalled to her memory many a deed of violence, which, according to tradition, had been done and suffered among them. In earlier days they had been the haunt of robbers and assassins, the memory of whose crimes is preserved in the various edicts which the council of the city, and even the parliament of Scotland, had passed for dispersing their bands, and ensuring safety to the lieges, so near the precincts of the city.

62. I know no handicraft, no art,
But I have conquered fate;
For I have chosen the better part,
And neither hope, nor fear, nor hate.
With placid breath on pain and death,
My certain alms, alone I wait.

5

63. Her tears made dulcet fretting,
Her voice had no word,
More than thunder or the bird.
Yet, unforgetting,
The ravished soul her meanings knew. Mine
ears heard not, and I heard.

5

64. When I stood lone on the height my sorrow did speak,
 As I went down the hill, I cried and I cried,
 The soft little hands of the rain stroking my cheek,
 The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

65. But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair, 5
 That goes down to the empty hall,
 Harkening in an air stirr'd and shaken
 By the lonely Traveller's call.

66. But that could not be done at once, and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them. Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

"It is coming, Maggie!" Tom said, in a deep, hoarse voice, loosing the oars, and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water—and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared—but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted: living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.

67. Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world. I am speaking for myself only; and I am far from denying the real force of the arguments in proof of a God, drawn from the general facts of human society (and the course of history); but these do not warm me or enlighten me; they do not take away the winter of my desolation, or make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within me, and my moral being rejoice. The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

68. Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all, and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption.

69. I am the End to which the whole world strives:

Therefore ye are girdled with a wild desire and shod
With sorrow; for among you all no soul
Shall ever cease or sleep or reach its goal
Of union and communion with the Whole,
Or rest content with less than being God.
Still, as unending asymptotes, your lives
In all their myriad wandering ways
Approach Me with the progress of the golden days.

5

70. I go not about to inveigh against wit, for then I were witless, but frankly to confess mine own little wit. I have ever thought so superstitiously of wit, that I fear I have committed Idolatry against wisdom, and if Nature had dealt so beneficially with me to have given me any wit, I should have been readier in the defence of it to have made an Apology, than any way to turn to Apostacy.

71. But to speak in a mean. The virtue of Prosperity is temperance; the virtue of Adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New: which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon.

72. Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measure to sing and celebrate Thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her whole vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world.

73. Though Somnus in Homer be sent to rouse up Agamemnon, I find no such effects in these drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia. But who can be drowsy at that hour which freed us from everlasting sleep? or have slumbering thoughts at that time, when sleep itself must end, and as some conjecture all shall awake again?

74. And indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

75. Darkling I listen; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 5
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still would'st thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 10

—Kant

76. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day 5
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.
77. Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions, 5
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild. 10
78. The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour 5
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping towards his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said; 10
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"
79. All that I shall now say of it is, that a good man is united
unto God, as a flame touches a flame, and combines into splendour
and to glory; so is the spirit of a man united unto Christ by the
Spirit of God. These are the friends of God, and they best know
God's mind, and they only that are so, know how much such men
do know. They have a special unction from above: so that now
you are come to the top of all; this is the highest round of the
ladder, and the angels stand upon it: they dwell in love and
contemplation, they worship and obey, but dispute not: and our
quarrels and impertinent wranglings about religion are nothing
else but the want of the measures of this state. Our light is like

a candle; every wind of vain doctrine blows it out, or spends the wax, and makes the light tremulous; but the lights of heaven are fixed and bright, and shine for ever.

80. With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university; but was soon torn from thence by that public violent storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars, to me, the hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses in the world.

81. I will take heed both of a speedy friend and a slow enemy. Love is never lasting which flames before it burns; and hate, like wetted coals, throws a fiercer heat when fire gets the mastery. As quick wits have seldom sound judgments which should make them continue: so friendship kindled suddenly is rarely found to consist with the durability of affection. Enduring love is ever built on virtue, which no man can see in another at once.

82. There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool, 5
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watch dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.

83. They looking back all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon; 5
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

84. Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill, blustering winds, or driving rain,
 Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut, 5
 That from the mountain's side,
 Views wilds and swelling floods.

85. There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
 In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
 Where the small eels that left the deeper way
 For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
 Where gaping mussels, left upon the mud, 5
 Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood:—
 Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
 How sidelong crabs had scrawled their crooked race
 Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
 Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye. 10

86. O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could
 advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast
 done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hath cast
 out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the
 far-fetched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of men,
 and covered it all over with these two narrow words,—*Hic jacet*.

87. If some king of the earth have so large an extent of
 dominion in north and south, as that he hath winter and summer
 together in his dominions, so large an extent east and west as
 that he hath day and night together in his dominions, much more
 hath God mercy and judgment together; He brought light out of
 darkness, not out of a lesser light; He can bring thy summer out
 of winter, though thou have no spring; though in the ways of
 fortune, or understanding, or conscience, thou have been benighted
 till now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and
 benumbed, smothered and stupified till now, now God comes to
 thee, not as in the dawning of the day, nor as in the bud of the
 spring, but as the sun at noon, to illustrate all shadows, as the
 sheaves in harvest, to fill all penuries; all occasions invite His
 mercies, and all times are His seasons.

88. But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes
 such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it
 might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at
 midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I

have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?"

89. Yet, by his ear directed, guessed
 Something imprisoned in the chest,
 And, doubtful what, with prudent care,
 Resolved it should continue there.
 At length a voice which well he knew,
 A long and melancholy mew,
 Saluting his poetic ears,
 Consoled him and dispelled his fears.

5

90. With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
 How silently, and with how wan a face!
 What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
 That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
 Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,
 I read it in thy looks; thy languisht grace,
 To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
 Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
 Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
 Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
 Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
 Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
 Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

5

10

91. Weep no more, woful Shepherds, weep no more,
 For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
 And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
 Thro' the dear might of Him that walked the waves.

5

— Milton

92. Then gently scan your brother Man,
Still gentler sister Woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark, 5
The moving Why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

93. Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made,
Let winds and tempests beat;
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay, 5
True love doth pass away.

94. Some grounds that wept with water, or frowned with thorns, by draining the one, and clearing the other, he maketh both to laugh and sing with corn. By marl and limestones burnt, he bettereth his ground; and his industry worketh miracles, by turning stones into bread. Conquest and good husbandry both enlarge the king's dominions; the one, by the sword, making the acres more in number; the other, by the plough, making the same acres more in value.

95. In this unhappy battle was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland; a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war, than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity.

96. As in the book immediately foregoing, the Author very plainly hath pointed at the main block which lieth in the way as a hindrance to the progress of his brain-itineraries; so in this, the third of his Introduction, doth he, with great perspicacity, educe most peremptory reasons out of the clearest springs of both modern and ancient, divine and human law, why it should be removed. In the meanwhile, the better to prepare the reader towards a matter of so prime concernment, he begins the purpose with a peculiar and domestic narrative of the manner how these

impediments were cast in, to the end that the more unjustly he was dealt with by the persons who did inject them, the greater justice may appear in his relief from their oppressions.

97. But most by numbers judge a poet's song;
 And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong:
 In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
 Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
 Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear, 5
 Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
 Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
 These equal syllables alone require,
 Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
 While expletives their feeble aid do join; 10
 And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.
98. Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
 Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure
 Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul;
 Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
 That grumbling wave below. Th' unsightly plain 5
 Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
 Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
 Combine, and deepening into night shut up
 The day's fair face.
99. Who hath his life from rumours freed,
 Whose conscience is his strong retreat,
 Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
 Nor ruin make oppressors great,
 This man is freed from servile bands 5
 Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
 Lord of himself, though not of lands,
 And having nothing, yet hath all.
100. Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares Morality expires.
 For public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
 Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
 Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restor'd; 5
 Light dies before thy uncreating word;
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
 And universal darkness buries all.

101. At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

5

102. So pleasant their vain conceits are, that they hinder their ordinary tasks and necessary business; they cannot address themselves to them, or almost to any study or employment: these phantastical and bewitching thoughts so covertly, so feelingly, so urgently, so continually, set upon, creep in, insinuate, possess, overcome, distract, and detain them, they cannot, I say, go about their more necessary business, stave off or extricate themselves, but ever musing, melancholizing, and carried along as he (they say) that is led round about an heath with a *Puck* in the night.

103. For heavy lids had not long covered their lights when I thought, nay sure, I was, where I might discern all in this great *All*, the large compass of the rolling circles, the brightness and continual motion of those rubies of the night, which by their distance here below cannot be perceived; the silver-countenance of the wandering Moon, shining by another's light; the hanging of the Earth, as environed with a girdle of crystal; the Sun enthroned in the midst of the planets, eye of the heavens, and gem of this precious ring, the World.

104. Our life is short; and our days run
As fast away as does the sun:—
And as a vapour, or a drop of rain
Once lost, can ne'er be found again:
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade;
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna! come, let's go a Maying.

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CHAPTER IV

✓ APPRECIATION

✓ Now that we have studied the elements which go to make up style, and some of the main varieties of style, we have the apparatus with which to analyse our feeling for any particular piece of prose or verse, that is, we can attempt an ordered *appreciation*.

✓ Not, of course, that appreciation is a mere mechanical process: it is much more than that. An appreciation of any work of art is an estimation of its qualities and defects; but it is also a measure of the qualities and defects of the critic. You may easily learn to observe that a poet uses alliteration freely, that he has a simile in line 2 and a metaphor in line 4; you will not so easily decide whether his use of alliteration is beautiful or ugly, not so easily catch a glimpse of the writer's vision veiled by the simile or the metaphor.

For these, for the melody of a passage, for the colour and splendour of the words, for sublimity of thought—for the soul of the work, in short, you must train your own ear and eye and mind and soul, till in some degree they approach his. And this you can do only by reading and reading, and yet again reading—reading great books in a great way, and reading, too, the great books of Nature and Mankind from which the poet has learnt his art.

This primer does not pretend to teach you the study of nature and human nature: you must find out for yourself, if you do not already know, *how* to see the grace of a flower and the graciousness of a character. But, if you have studied the preceding chapters to any purpose, you will have already realised that reading a book is not a mere tearing from it of the story it tells or the argument it maintains, though neither story nor argument is to be despised, and the art of "skipping" is a very useful art. You will, it is hoped, have learnt to read poetry and great prose aloud, listening as you read to both time and tune, that is, rhythm and word-music; striving to see with your

"inward eye," your imagination, the hues and shapes which the poet saw; trying to feel the emotions that he records, and to think his thoughts after him.

The first stage, then, in any appreciation is an ecstasy—a getting out of yourself into the writer; if you cannot, by stripping yourself of your own prejudices and giving yourself up completely to the author's magic, attain this ecstasy, you cannot write an appreciation. You can at best write a cool summary of the more external beauties; at worst, you will write a depreciation.

But, assuming that you have caught something of the poet's vision, the next stage is *not* the taking of a pen and the writing down of an outburst of vague praise—"This is a perfect passage, full of lovely melody and beautiful pictures," and so on. Criticisms of that sort may apply equally well to hundreds of poems; they do not help others to see the beauties you have seen; they do not even show that you *have* seen the beauties; clearly you might write exactly like this even if you had not read the passage at all. No, the next stage is a quiet turning in upon yourself, a cultivation of what Wordsworth calls "the depth and not the tumult of the soul." You must call up that mood of peaceful reminiscence which some folk experience as they day-dream curled up in front of the fire or stretched on the summer grass; but you must do this without losing the warmth of your first enthusiasm. In this mood you must go over the passage again mentally, and ask yourself first exactly *what* it is that you like. Now is the time to let your mind take charge again. Now, if you like, you may disagree with your author, find fault with him if must be. Has he aroused your delight on false pretences? Was there, even in the middle of your delight, a jarring note? If so, why did it jar? Was the fault the writer's? Has he, for instance, made one of his characters do or say something which, in the circumstances, no human being would do or say?

Or is the fault yours? Are your sympathies too narrow? Is your objection to the passage merely that it is too pious—or not pious enough—for your taste; that he is writing about cats, and you "can't bear cats"; that

you had to write these lines as an imposition at school? You will be surprised to find how often it is extraneous causes such as these which interfere with your enjoyment.

When you have analysed your own feelings honestly and made the necessary allowances for your own prejudices, read through the passage again, trying to discover—with the help of your “apparatus”—why this phrase pleases and the other does not.

But, you may think, this is a terrible waste of time. Why not start straight away with the writing, or, at any rate, with the tabulating of beauties and defects? Well, the first reason—that such a method cannot result in a true appreciation—has already been given; the second is that what seems the longer method is really the shorter. Try; and see. The real waste of time is when you attempt to make your purely intellectual faculties do work for which they were never intended. Plunge straight into ink, and you will spend in the middle of your sentences much more time biting your pen than the preliminary “meditation” would have taken.

Now let us “appreciate” a passage, and see how the method works:—

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward soul,
Viceroy to that which, unto heav'n being gone,
Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution. *Donne*

Let us suppose you have passed the first stage—the reading aloud with all the “expression” of which you are capable, and the soaking of yourself in the sensations so evoked—and the second—the analysis of those sensations. Compare your list with what follows:—

(1) The passage needs careful reading if we are to understand it.

(2) The main idea seems far-fetched.

- (3) The subject is disagreeably gruesome.
- (4) We have to say "dissoluti-on" to make the rime and rhythm right.
- (5) "Subtle wreath" sounds fine: what does it mean?
- (6) "Outward soul" is a striking expression.
- (7) Except in the third line and very slightly in the first, there is nothing which brings a picture to our minds.
- (8) There is no *marked* music in the wording; no noticeable alliteration, assonance, or onomatopoeia. On the other hand, except for the soft hissing in the last line—which is not ugly—there is no harshness, jarring, or difficulty in the sound-combinations.
- (9) The last line is unintentionally funny in a grim way.
- (10) The metre is light and has a pleasing lilt, the rime scheme brings into prominence the finest phrase—"outward soul."
- (11) Until we reach the very last word we cannot guess what the poet is going to say; so the notion that a bracelet made of his lover's hair will keep his dead body from decaying, a notion odd enough in itself, becomes even more striking from its unexpectedness.

Some readers may have all these ideas, some only a few, some may have other ideas which do not appear in this list. The main thing is that you shall have an adequate number—say six—of *definite* conceptions, that you shall give the author a fair trial before sentencing him, and that your appreciation shall not miss all the most salient points.

Go through the list carefully then, and you will see that (4) is of no importance—clearly, when the poet wrote, the word was pronounced differently; and that (3) is of comparatively little importance—Death may be one of those subjects which we dislike, but lovers have a prescriptive right to insist that love survives death.

Of the remaining points, (2), (1), (7), (11), (8), (6), perhaps represents the order of significance; (2), at least, should be in every list.

But out of the same materials, many different appreciations may be made; there is no absolute standard in taste. One learner may write:—

This is the very ecstasy of love. Many a lover has told us that the sight of his mistress would bring him back from the brink of the grave, but this one maintains that a bracelet of his mistress's hair will keep his dead body uncorrupted. Yet the ecstasy, though it begins with the abruptness of real passion, soon loses touch with material things, soon loses the note of sincere feeling. By the time the poet reaches his grand confession of faith—artfully reserved till the last word of the stanza—he has changed his rapture for a cold and laboured succession of far-fetched comparisons—the bracelet, acting as the representative of his soul, keeps his limbs from falling asunder just as a viceroy keeps the various provinces of a king's realm from severing their connection with the governing centre.

The poet's inspiration, indeed, seems to have failed him a little at the end of the fifth line. After this even the rhythm is slightly uneasy—"unto heav'n being gone" does not run as trippingly as the rest of the passage, while all the best phrases—the finely imaginative "outward soul"; "subtle wreath," where "wreath" suggests at once the grave and the victor, and "subtle" combines with its original sense of "thin" a hint of its later force in anticipation of "mystery"; the rare reticence of "whoever comes to shroud me"—are in the first five lines.

Another, with the last chapter fresh in his mind and convinced that valour is the better part of discretion, may say boldly:

Clearly the writer of this passage belongs to the Metaphysical school. He has all the characteristics of Donne—his morbid pre-occupation with death; his rarefied and exaggerated passion, at once divorced from sense and acutely conscious of it; his inequality—the last three lines show a distinct falling-off in poetic power; his imagination and command of the striking phrase, *e.g.* "outward soul," "subtle wreath"; his preference

for the abstract—there is nothing in the stanza to call up a clear mental image, no detail, no sonorous beauty; his real command of metre, despite occasional roughness (e.g. *unto heav'n being gone*, where the slurring of *being* gives an ugly succession of sounds); his almost mystical sense of spiritual meanings behind the apparent ("the mystery, the sign you must not touch"—with a side reference to the mysteries and signs of other religions than the religion of love); his provoking fondness for far-fetched comparisons.

A third, less ambitious, will begin:—

The chief characteristic of this passage is its deliberate extravagance. The author is more concerned to be witty than to be wise; he attempts to surprise us at the expense of reason, maintaining that a hair-bracelet can preserve his body from putrefaction, *etc.* Another characteristic is the absence of concrete images, *etc.*

Yet the author has real imagination, as we can see in his use of such phrases as "outward soul" and "subtle wreath."

Nor is he without a fine sense of rhythm, *etc.*

None of these appreciations is bad; for each reflects a distinct personal opinion, and none is content merely to praise or blame blindly. A bad appreciation might run something like this:—

This writer has chosen a very gloomy subject, and has written nonsense about it. It is impossible to tell what he means; "outward soul" is rubbish—all souls are inward. One cannot call a bracelet a wreath; wreaths are worn on the head, not the arm. Nor can a wreath be subtle, since it has no mind. It is impossible, too, to question a wreath. The last three lines are quite unintelligible, and the last line has neither rime nor rhythm.

This is a bad appreciation because it shows that the writer of it (*a*) is so conceited as to assume that what he does not understand must be nonsense; (*b*) has not sufficient intelligence and command of English to comprehend a fairly difficult passage; (*c*) has not enough imagination to appreciate any kind of figure of speech; by his standards such an everyday statement as "she has fine roses in her cheeks" would be merely "nonsense"; (*d*) has not sufficient

familiarity with poetry to realise that "dissolution" cannot here have its modern pronunciation.

Now let us examine a piece of prose:—

The provincial spirit, again, exaggerates the value of its ideas, for want of a high standard at hand by which to try them. Or rather, for want of such a standard, it gives one idea too much prominence at the expense of others; it orders its ideas amiss; it is hurried away by fancies; it likes and dislikes too passionately, too exclusively. Its admiration weeps hysterical tears, and its disapprobation foams at the mouth . . . For, not having the lucidity of a large and centrally placed intelligence, the provincial spirit has not its graciousness; it does not persuade, it makes war, it has not urbanity, the tone of the city, of the centre, the tone which always aims at a spiritual and intellectual effect, and, not excluding the use of banter, never disjoins banter itself from politeness, from felicity.

The first thing which strikes us in this passage is that its *aim* is entirely different from that of the passage of poetry: it does not seek to open for us magic casements that bring fairyland before our eyes; it does not seek to raise us to an ecstasy; it seeks to convince; it appeals to our reason. This, then, gives us our method of approach: the dreamy, meditative stage of appreciation will help us little here. We shall still need to keep our senses acute, to note the sound of the passage, but we shall be merely wasting our time if we look first of all for aesthetic satisfaction. To appreciate this extract we must give the author what he asks of us—our reason.

Our first step, then, will be to master his argument, see whether he does, on the whole, persuade us that he is talking sense, and whether—still more important—he succeeds in making us understand what he is saying. Not, of course, that we shall give in our appreciation a summary of his ideas; such a summary is no part of a discussion of form, and would merely show that we had no clear idea of what we were attempting. But, before we can judge at all whether a writer has expressed his idea adequately, we must obviously know what idea he is trying to express.

The main idea of the passage is clear: the author is pointing out the defects of the "provincial spirit," the spirit which grows up in those who live isolated from the great centres of civilisation. And, to make his point of view plain, he has recourse to that instrument with which we have already become familiar—contrast. He gives us two series of descriptions; in the first, he tells us what are the fruits of the provincial spirit; in the second, he describes the fruits of the urbane spirit. This contrast is the backbone of the passage; let us make it the backbone of our appreciation. For, just as the backbone gives the animal its shape, so this contrast gives form to the passage—it conditions the wording of almost every phrase. Let us, then, using once more our "instrument"—the knowledge of elements of style—begin our appreciation.

This passage is a study in contrasts. First, we have the contrast which forms the root idea—the contrast between the provincial and the urbane spirit. But this contrast is not dissipated in a series of short antitheses. It is arranged in two blocks, balanced one against the other. Between these two blocks, we get ("For, not . . . graciousness") an explanation of the difference between the two spirits—an explanation which breaks the succession of short clauses, so avoiding monotony, and at the same time forms a perfect logical transition from one idea to the other.

Much the same thing is noticeable at the beginning of the passage: the statement that "the provincial spirit exaggerates the value of its ideas" is followed, not directly by further description of the provincial spirit but, first, by an account of why there is such exaggeration, and then by a modification of the earlier description.

These passages, then, are in themselves a contrast to the short, unconnected clauses which form the bulk of the passage, and which—though not strictly antitheses—have the epigrammatic value of the antithesis, since each suggests the complete contrast, one side only of which it explicitly states.

The brevity of the clauses, too, helps the impression of perfect clarity which the passage gives us—a clarity attained with the use of very little concrete imagery ("weeps hysterical tears . . . foams at the mouth") and in spite of a large "learned" Latin element in vocabulary.

Here, as with the poetical passage, there is, of course, no standard appreciation; you are not bound to arrange your impressions in the way suggested above. You may choose the clarity of the piece as your main theme, and show in detail how the other characteristics help to give this clarity; you may show how the author maintains an attitude of sweet and persuasive reasonableness; you may show how each of the parallel clauses adds something fresh to the ideas already evoked. The only essential is that you should state in orderly fashion the impression made upon you by the passage.

That too, is the only essential of a good criticism of a character in a play or novel, or of a long work of art in prose or poetry. Suppose, for instance, you are to give your impressions of Ophelia. Just as you "meditated" upon the verse-passage for appreciation, so you will "meditate" upon Ophelia, trying to call before your mind a picture of her, trying to understand her thoughts and feelings. Then, when you feel you know her as you know your best friend, imagine yourself telling that friend what kind of girl she is. Your friend, you must suppose, has read the play for himself: but, in case he may not agree with your opinion, you will naturally refer to incidents which support your view of her character. When you have written down what you would say—assuming of course, that you and your friend are accustomed to using English, and not slang—try to discover its faults for yourself.

Now read the following—an appreciation intended not as a model, but as some sort of a guide—

Ophelia is perhaps the most pathetic of Shakespeare's women. Her pompous and dogmatic father Polonius, and her fiery, self-willed brother, Laertes, have trained her to be gentle, pliant, and obedient. Hence, although she loves Hamlet devotedly, she is weak enough to let herself be used as a decoy by means of which his thoughts and plans may be surprised. Hamlet's bitter speech of disillusion and repudiation terrifies as much as it wounds her. The death of her father and Hamlet's banishment, following closely upon this shock, shatter her intellect.

Even in her madness, however, she is the same tender, graceful, creature, incapable of anger as before, and there is something

symbolically appropriate in the manner of her death—floating unresistingly down-stream until she sinks.

You will notice that the first sentence registers the main impression produced by Ophelia, and all the rest of the appreciation amplifies and illustrates the opening statement. In that way the criticism becomes an artistic whole, not a mere series of disconnected ideas.

The second sentence gives you the root cause of her pathetic appeal—her too-yielding nature: at the same time it contrasts her with her brother and father, and suggests their share of responsibility for her fate. Next, another element in her character—her love for Hamlet—is mentioned, but the reference to it is linked naturally on to what precedes, for the chief point even here is not her love but her weakness. The following sentence gives by its allusion to her terror further evidence of that weakness, at the same time as it shows the result of her submissive complicity in her father's plot.

The final sentence of the first paragraph stresses once more her pathos; and the last paragraph gathers up all her outstanding qualities into a single picture.

You will notice that this appreciation alludes to all the main events in Ophelia's life, but that it *only* alludes to them, using them to illustrate her character: there is no attempt to give an account of her life. This is one of the chief merits of an appreciation; too often there is no clear idea in the writer's mind of whether he is writing a life or drawing a character. He may begin:—

Ophelia is a very pathetic character. She has a pompous old father and a bullying brother. She falls in love with Hamlet, but he is unkind to her and she goes mad. She is very gentle and sweet.

Obviously this appreciation will contain almost exactly the same information as the first, but the effect will be entirely different. In the first appreciation every sentence was another touch in the sketch of Ophelia's character; in the second, incidents in her life and traits in her character are jumbled together in hopeless confusion—the writer has no *single purpose* in what he writes.

“ But,” you may say, “ this is all very well. Everyone knows what Ophelia is like. But I may have to describe somebody in a poem or novel whose character is not so clear. What am I to do then?”

Well, if the character is not clear, the reason may be one of three—you may be dull-sighted, the author may be unskilful or the character may be exceptionally complex. It is for you to decide which reason affects the particular case. You can most easily remove your own disqualifications, as has already been hinted more than once, by a steady course of reading: reading, too, will help you to decide between the other two alternatives—though, generally speaking, it is unsafe to assume that the fault is the author's.

But you can also help yourself by a series of questions.—Is the character strong or weak? Kind or harsh? Good-tempered or bad-tempered? Brave or cowardly? Idle or industrious? Cheerful or sad? Commonplace or unusual? Clever or dull? How do I know which adjectives are applicable? What incidents or speeches enable me to judge? What do the other characters in the work think or say of him (or her)? How do they behave towards him (or her)? Is it probable that anybody would do, say, and think the things done, said, and thought by this character?

When you have answered all these questions and any more that occur to you, you should have a sufficiently clear idea of the character's chief traits to call up a mental picture of him in your few minutes' meditation. “ But surely *after* I have analysed the character I don't need this silly meditation? ” You certainly do need it—after the analysis if you cannot manage it before. Otherwise your conception of the character—and your appreciation—will lack unity, will reveal not a living character but a mere mechanical conjunction of qualities.

Much the same method may be adopted if you have to appreciate a novel. Let us take *David Copperfield* as an example and think ourselves back to the time when we first read it. Let us call up the glow of satisfied excitement with which we closed the book and try to discover

what caused that glow. Here, perhaps, the very lapse of time will help us. What stands out most clearly in our memory now, we can be very sure is what made the deepest impression upon us then. What pictures, then, do we see when we shut our eyes and use the words "David Copperfield" as our "Open Sesame." First, probably, David as a youngster at home, then David with the Peggotty family, then David at Mr. Creakle's, and so on. But as the pictures succeed one another, we find that David himself figures in them less frequently. This, then, will give us a "main idea" round which to group our impressions. For the rest here, as in our account of Ophelia, we must be careful not to be led astray from our theme by a desire to enlarge upon some subsidiary episode—Little Em'ly's story, say, or the death of Dora. A passing reference, some single adjective or noun which gives our feeling on the subject, is all that we can allow ourselves. Perhaps the final result will be something like this:—

David Copperfield, often reckoned Dickens's greatest book, owes much of its fame to the psychological truth with which David's childish feelings are portrayed. The interest with which we follow his friendship with the Peggotty family, his brief experience of Mr. Creakle, the hardships of his life in the warehouse after his mother's death, his school days, and his boyish love for Dora Spenlow, changes imperceptibly as the story advances from an interest in David to an interest in the plot and in the other characters, but this is due as much to the attractions of the inimitable Micawber, the scoundrelism of Uriah Heep, and the pathos of Little Em'ly's history as to any loss of reality in David himself. He retains our sympathies even in his second marriage, though Agnes has not Dora's charm.

Or we may find ourselves in disagreement with the orthodox view and write:—

David Copperfield is generally praised as primarily a wonderful picture of child life. It is true that young David is a very vivid little figure—though no more vivid perhaps than young Pip in *Great Expectations*. But the main interest of the story surely does not lie there: if it did, the greater part of the book

would have to be reckoned a failure. No: for most of us *David Copperfield* means Micawber and his absurd optimism and the moving if melodramatic tale of Little Em'ly. Beside these bright realities the empty-headed Dora and the stockishly pious Agnes are but dim fancies from the realm of Never-Was.

Nor, of course, do these two appreciations at all exhaust the ways in which the novel may be criticised. You may take as your main theme Dickens's love of dramatic situations, the gallery of caricatures which he gives us, his ability to tell an interesting tale, his fondness for springing surprises on the reader, or any one of half-a-dozen more.

An appreciation of a play hardly differs from an appreciation of a novel, unless you are criticising the acting as well as the play itself. Here, as with the novel, you must not attempt to give the plot; here, as with the novel, you must—if you are to avoid a meaningless cloud of phrases—refer freely to incidents and characters in the play; here, as with the novel, your impressions should be threaded on some connecting idea, not mere loose beads scattered haphazard.

Take an account of *King Lear*, for instance:—

King Lear is in the intensity of its passion the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies. Its theme is filial ingratitude, and it follows the general rule of Shakespeare's tragedies in that disaster is brought about by some weakness in the central characters, Lear in the main plot and Gloucester in the under-plot. But here, more even than in *Hamlet*, "the time is out of joint," and Lear's tremendous denunciations are not too fierce for the monstrous crimes by which he is surrounded. For it is not only the treatment meted out to him by his daughters Goneril and Regan and to Gloucester by the latter's son Edmund that produces the tragic gloom of the play. Lear himself passes from the consideration of his personal wrongs to curses on the general foulness of "this great stage of fools." The tempest, the wild heath, the madness, all increase the impression of something unbalanced in the very constitution of the universe; and the Fool, who acts as chorus till there is no longer place for even his poor cheerfulness, has in fact no brighter comment on life to offer than has Lear himself.

Here the main theme—the passionate intensity of the play—is given in the first sentence, and the whole of what follows amplifies and illustrates that preliminary statement. From the more obvious points—the tragic events of the plot, and Lear's denunciations—we pass to those subtler matters of background and tragic-comic relief which give "atmosphere," and divide the great tragedian from the skilful constructor of rhetorical melodrama. And, as in the case of the novel, there is no reason why we should not write a score of other appreciations, each dealing with some particular aspect: the only difference, perhaps, is that with the play we may find it convenient to criticise the development of the subject act by act, whereas the greater length and complexity of the novel make an ordered survey from beginning to end impossible.

At first sight the appreciation of a poem is a more difficult matter. In reality, however, it involves little that is new to us. We have already seen how to deal intensively with a short passage of verse; we have already seen how to criticise a long work of art: if we combine the two we shall know how to appreciate a poem. We must consider the style: is it ornate or simple, imaginative or pedestrian, pictorial, musical, full of thought, marked by contrasts, full of epigrams? We must consider the aim of the poet: does he achieve it? In the case of a long poem we must consider the structure: is the story well told, the argument skilfully developed, the arrangement of the parts good? Briefly, the criticism of a short poem approximates to that of a passage of verse, while the criticism of a long poem approximates to that of a novel or play.

If we take Wordsworth's *Alice Fell* we shall need the qualities of both types, for, although the poem is short, it is not a "swallow flight of song": it is a story whose value depends at least as much on the theme and narrative as on the beauty of the wording. Our appreciation, then, may run something like this:—

Wordsworth's theories as to the nature of poetry often had an unhappy effect upon his art, and he achieved some of his best work by ignoring those theories. In *Alice Fell*, however, he

succeeds in producing a poem which both satisfies the lover of poetry and conforms to his own canons. Its subject—the grief of an orphan child whose tattered cloak is caught in the wheels of a postchaise—could not well be more simple; the diction and metre are as simple as the subject. Yet, through the force of his sympathetic imagination, the poet produces with these slight materials a genuinely pathetic effect. To Alice Fell her ragged cloak is as much as is his kingdom to a monarch: tragedy, Wordsworth shows us, is constituted by the quality and depth of emotion, not by the importance of the material cause which evokes it.

Here the emphasis is divided fairly equally between style and matter, the connecting link being the simplicity apparent in both. If we had been considering Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, however, we should have been obliged to give less space in proportion to comments upon the way in which the poem is written, and more to an appreciation of what it is written about—the village and the people in it. If, on the other hand, we had been criticising a short lyric like Herrick's "Fair Daffodils, we weep," our appreciation would have been to all intents and purposes an "appreciation of a verse passage."

The same is true of any non-fiction prose work. An appreciation of Lamb's *Dream Children* might read:—

Dream Children is perhaps the greatest of Lamb's Essays, combining his whimsicality and fanciful imagination with the peculiar wistful pathos of which he is, at will, a master. The slight strokes of description, the little touches which give the very manner and nature of children—"Here John smiled, as much as to say, 'that would be foolish indeed'" . . . "Here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement till, upon my looking grave, it desisted"—make of these, who "are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams," two of the most real and gracious child figures in literature.

This criticism contains a good deal of detail; but if our appreciation were of Lamb's *Essays* as a whole we should be obliged to take a more general view—to quote less, to say more of Lamb's characteristics, something of his choice of subject, a little perhaps of the influences which

helped to make his prose what it was. But, whatever we say, the same guiding axioms are applicable—a good sentence at the beginning, a better sentence at the end, and in between a stout, straight connecting thread.

You will, indeed, probably have realised by this time that, however important it may be in an appreciation to say the right thing, it is vastly more important to say something—anything—in the right way.

EXERCISE IV.

1. Write an appreciation of each of the passages in Exercise III.

2. Write an appreciation of (a) your favourite novel, (b) your favourite short story, (c) your favourite poem.

3. Write appreciations of *As You Like It*, *School for Scandal*, *Hamlet*, Galsworthy's *Justice*, Flecker's *Hassan*, *The Rivals*, *Twelfth Night*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Beggar's Opera*, Barrie's *The Will*, Shaw's *Candida*, *The Mikado*.

4. Which of the two appreciations of *David Copperfield* given in the last chapter do you prefer? Why?

5. Write appreciations of Sam Weller, Mrs. Proudie, Mr. Collins (in *Pride and Prejudice*), Mrs. Gamp, Andrew Fairservice, Jeanie Deans, Mrs. Dombey, Mr. Micawber, Diana of the Crossways, Mrs. 'Arris (in *Martin Chuzzlewit*), the Fool in *Lear*, Charles Surface, Becky Sharp, Maggie Tulliver, Miranda, Tess D'Urberville, Mr. Lewisham (in *Love and Mr. Lewisham*).

6. Write a critical account of each of the following:—*Lamia*, *Adonais*, *Lycidas*, *Rob Roy*, *The De Coverley Papers*, *Treasure Island*, *Childe Harold*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Passing of Arthur*, Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark*, Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*, *Comus*, *Adam Bede*, *Jane Eyre*, *Kenilworth*, Wells's *Kipps*, Masefield's *Dauber*, Kipling's *First Jungle Book*.

7. Which of the passages in Exercise III. remind you of (a) Keats, (b) Spenser; and why?

CHAPTER V

LITERARY VALUE

Now we come to the most important part of our subject—estimating the *value* of a piece of literature. It is necessary to be able to analyse a writer's style, as suggested in the previous chapters; but the ultimate aim of this analysis is to enable us to judge the real literary value of his work. We must not be misled by all this talk of simile, personification and the rest. To be able to pick out a simile or metaphor is in itself merely recognition. What we have to ask ourselves is "What *valuable light* does it shed on the author?" If the answer is "none," then that figure of speech is as dead as Marley's ghost, however striking it may be. We shall find this simple test very useful in distinguishing between the living and the dead.

Now a great deal of contradictory material, extending over several thousands of years, has been written about what constitutes the value of a given work. When the greatest critics disagree, and when there is no accepted formula, what can the mere student do? He can say, at least, "I *feel* an inclination, desire, to go on reading this", or, as the reviewers say far too often, "Absorbing! I simply could not put the book down." But unfortunately, this does not lead us far in our quest for *value*. In fact it is very misleading. We should find ourselves including in our "Hundred Best Books" twopenny weeklies and "thrillers," because we could honestly say they passed the test, just as, if we looked closer, we should find that the masterpiece praised by the reviewer was most likely a detective story, as ingenious as, but no more "permanent" than, a cross-word puzzle. We cannot, then, trust feelings which merely tell us "This interests me", or "This gives me pleasure."

Are we at a dead end then? For the objection anybody with his wits about him would make is "How can

we say anything about a book except what we *feel* about it? What other ways of perception have we? " The answer is obviously " None. We must accept what our senses tell us, because we simply have no other way of getting in touch with anything outside us."

But we must make the plunge and suggest *something* as a criterion of value, after tormenting the reader so. And it must be somehow a function of *feeling*. The suggested solution is the not-very-clear words " the *higher feelings*." There are feelings and feelings, different not in kind but in degree. Now it seems to be a physical fact that a higher *organisation* of feeling is of more value to our whole system than a feeling that is crude and easily aroused. In fact value in literature, and in everything else, is in the degree of organisation. We have incredibly complicated impulses, all yearning to be satisfied, and that which satisfies the largest number of these various inter-connected systems, and thwarts the least number, is valuable to us.

How are we to know? The answer to this makes clear the difference between our books of low appeal and high appeal. A good book gives us a feeling of *liberation*; we feel that all our activities are engaged and interacting on each other, and that we are living to the full; a bad book makes us *the slave* of one or two crude emotions; however much it excites us, it is really a drug. Some go as far as to say that, if read uncritically, a bad book definitely unfits us for more delicately-balanced and so more valuable sensations. " Violent and unnatural stimulants " chain us to a low craving, like a drunkard's.

There is one more important definition before we have done with all this theorising. A book may be unsatisfactory because it is successful in calling forth the desired response in us, or because it is unsuccessful. If it is successful in calling out a low response, then it is a bad book; if it aims to appeal to a highly-developed sensibility, and fails because it is defective somewhere, then it is not bad but a good book gone wrong, and so may have some value for the sensitively sympathetic reader (do not forget what meaning we have placed on the word " value ").

With regard to this "higher appeal," many cunning writers try to establish their superiority by a *cheap* appeal to our "higher emotions." It often needs a highly-trained sensibility to distinguish between the real thing and the fake. It is safe to say in general: "Do not give an uncritical response to an appeal to what are called your higher susceptibilities. Be on your guard against anything 'high falutin'." This often happens, especially with readers who have a genuine feeling for, say, religion, or "Nature." They give their entire trust to anyone who even mentions these "higher things," without carefully analysing the writer's credentials. It is to be hoped that the critical training which is so necessary for students will teach them to set a true value even upon writers hailed in many quarters as "front-rank." To distinguish between the "almosts" and the "quites" is the last, hardest and most valuable test of a genuinely appreciative critical apparatus, just as the degree of sensitiveness of the "register" in a scientific instrument is a criterion of its value.

A last warning, before we leave this section of the preliminaries of evaluation. Beware of "swallowing" the work which has a superficial "realism." Almost all modern fiction is like this, but "poetry" can be also. This type of writing tries to disarm you critically by making you say "What charming people! Just like so and so! That's just how people talk at breakfast". Or "What a beautiful thought! Just what anyone might think of." You will find that such works are cleverly designed to attract your sense of recognition. They provide you with a ready-made method of looking at everything by saying "This is how our sort of people behave in such and such a situation." Thus, instead of giving you new sensations and approaches to life, they cut you off from living by flattering your social prejudices, thus hardening them and destroying your sensitivity to new experience. They are more dangerous than professed thrillers, which may possibly have some value, if only that of a purgative.

You will have noticed how vague the above sections are. That is the worst of theorising about critical

appreciation; it is forced to be unsatisfactory, because the real test only comes when you have a book in front of you to "appreciate." But unfortunately, as teachers who have made experiments in collecting students' first attempts at criticism have had no difficulty in showing, it is one thing to get "the feel" of a book, and another thing to express it so that others can know what it means to you. These experiments have shown also that different students' remarks about the same poem have varied to a fantastic degree, not only in their account of its "contents," but in their estimates of its value. This seems to indicate that a training in taste is necessary, and it is very hard to inculcate this training, or even to sketch general lines to be followed. For it is not easy to state the *nature* of criticism. Is it a science or an art? Can we crystallise its methods into definite shapes, as in, say mathematics? Can we apply the laws of cause and effect to our impressions of a work of art? The answer seems to be that it is neither a science nor an art. Science collects data from natural phenomena and tries to observe general laws which emerge from the data. Classify and then formulate: that is the method of science. But our responses are so unbelievably complex and so coloured by our individuality that it appears impossible to collect "objective" data and formulate general laws from them. On the other hand we tend to get a state of chaos if it is a case of every man his own authority. Communication then is difficult; our isolation is unpleasantly emphasised. In some respects this state prevails to-day, and has done, in fact, since the Romantics threw overboard the "canons of taste" which the 18th century evolved, and denied that judgments based on these critical canons could be valid. We are not concerned here with the merits or demerits of 18th century criticism, but what is important is that such an "objective" body of law should have existed; we feel the need of such a system badly, now that the power of Romanticism which made the judgments of its critics—in particular of Coleridge—often so "intuitively" penetrating and fundamental has dissipated itself through paler and paler ages of imitation. Therefore the incoherence

of the student's written responses is not altogether blamable; his education in that respect has been negligible.

Returning to our definition of "appreciation" (by this term, we do not of course mean just praise, but an estimate of value) we can understand then that there is a necessity to clarify our impressions of a work of art, along accepted and traditional lines if possible: that is, to make our methods of judgment as scientific as we can. As critics we have to stand outside ourselves, as it were, and try to give an outside investigator's account of the qualities which give us the inner sensation of richer, higher, and deeper living we have defined before as the effect of a good work of art; and, where this sensation is not present, we must try to account for its absence by noting defects in the work in question. Beware, then, of the critic who does not use analytical language, who "rhapsodises" about his subject. This means that he has not been able to analyse his impressions clearly enough to communicate them; instead he tries to save his prestige by moving the reader, so that he shall say not "This is an illuminating account of what the critic's reactions to the poem are," but "This is a good piece of writing." Such criticism, however genuinely inspired, is of no value; it is itself creative writing gone wrong.

Now we cannot forget all about the periods since the 18th century, and judge books by the standards of that century only; and it is admitted that there are no generally-accepted standards to-day. What is the earnest student to do without these traditions? The answer is "Make some." That is not easy, since we have nothing to go on; but all pioneer work done now will help to establish a tradition which will make it simpler for future students. What we need is something to start us off, and this initial push is provided by what has been called the Comparative Method.

We all use it to some extent, but not consciously and deliberately enough as a means of producing valuable results. Everything is relative. We can only tell what heat is by experiencing cold. This is a simple example of the comparative method. And so in literature we must test

a work by our previous experiences with others of the same type. This not only clarifies our ideas of the scope, aims, etc. (in a word, contents) of the work, but also leads us to make judgments. At its simplest the method works something like this: "I feel *A* is better than *B*. Why? I read *B* through with great excitement. *A* made me stop and think. *B* swept me off my feet. *A* kept me perpetually alert; it tested my relations with life at a large number of points. *B* made me forget. If I think back over the books again, I am forced to the conclusion that *A* was, and can be again, a more valuable experience than *B*. *B* cannot be an experience again; it is exhausted. *A* has broken down barriers inside me; I am aware of new possibilities and wider scopes."

In this single analysis, we are thinking of the *general* effects of two probably very different books. The more subtle applications of the method, which settle more difficult questions of value for us, are used when we compare books or poems which deal, wholly or in part, with similar themes. We may be violently stirred by a book, and think "This is a masterpiece." Before committing ourselves so easily, let us reflect. Suppose the book deals with white men in India. What a luscious luxurious atmosphere! What men like gods, being entertained by friendly princes and clubbing a ball hard from the back of a pony! The reader is presented with a rich feeling of friendship "that triumphs over race and creed." But is it really as satisfying and rosy as that? Didn't we read another book on India whose effect was neither rosy nor satisfying? A book which gave the impression of really getting at fundamentals, of not shirking problems, of realising more the complexity and difficulty of communication between men of different colour and power? A book in which the writer did not blind himself by easy gushes of feeling, but examined coolly and profoundly, seemed really absorbed in his subject and not merely concerned with an easy appeal to our emotions and conventionalised feelings? We shall probably find that if the former book is by *X* (where *X* equals an indefinite number of popular entertainers) and the latter is *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster,

then the latter has thrown a strong light on the dreadful inferiority of *X*, while the badness of *X* and his kin has made us all the more grateful for the value (and seriousness) of Mr. Forster.

As we apply the method to less and less obvious cases, we find we have an extraordinarily elastic and subtle method of judgment: which is the same as saying that our sensibility becomes more and more sensitive and highly-trained. As soon as the inferiority of a once-favourite author is revealed, we have made a step forward. As our reactions become more and more satisfying we apply the method less and less consciously, because the valuable experiences it has given us have become a tradition, as it were, in us; have permanently increased the degree of organisation of our impulses, so that our judgments seem to become "intuitional" (if the word can really mean anything). Only occasionally do we have to "go back to first principles" to distinguish an "almost" from a "quite"—the hardest test.

This method is not new. Matthew Arnold judged literary work by "touchstones," *i.e.* by "mottoes" from the generally-accepted greatest writers. This was rather crude, because there was not necessarily a comparison with a writer eminent in the same field. Mr. T. S. Eliot included foreign literatures in his comparative sweep, thinking that the critical instrument must be made more sensitive by an awareness of what has gone on and is going on all over Europe. The subtleties are inexhaustible, but in the meantime for the student the method is one by which to test his critical ability and to revise his standards. If it is followed up with the seriousness it demands, it will be seen that literature, free from the conventional hypocrisy which is an insidious but almost inevitable component of our attitude to it, is a very important thing in our living.

Let us submit our methods to the ordeal of practice. Individual criticisms of the same work will naturally differ, for a good poem or novel is almost inexhaustible and different temperaments will stress different features, but the estimate of the *value* should be the same. And

there should be no longer an excuse for undifferentiated black-or-white responses such as "This is a bad book. I could not understand it," or "This is a lovely poem. I was simply enthralled," or even for such vague and question-begging remarks as "This is a perfect passage, full of lovely melody and beautiful pictures. The rhythm is smooth, etc.": this is the hypocritical criticism of someone who has learned a few general terms and just applies them to everything he sees: it is a commoner method of settling things than most of us would confess to!

We will examine a poem. First we will observe certain qualities in it—that is, certain classes of responses *in us* which we can identify—and then, by comparing it with another poem, we will estimate its value as an experience. We are choosing the well-known but under-estimated ballad of *The Wife of Usher's Well*, since it is an apparently "simple" poem, in a tradition about which everyone knows something, and has not the difficulty of response that most good "personal" poems have, that intimate analysis of a complex emotion seen in Donne, Shakespeare, G. M. Hopkins.

Read the poem through first. On the face of it it is a not very exciting story told in a roundabout way; the connecting links are in straightforward narrative; the important "close-ups" are in conversation from which we gather the story through allusion. There is nothing complex or individual about it. There is no ornament which is there just to make it "beautiful." The poem has the hardness and smoothness of a stone pillar which has been touched lovingly by thousands of people for many years. It is stripped to its essentials, there is no loose furniture about it. There is a stark atmosphere, a dominant under-statement, a simple rhythm that we recognise as typical of a certain definite class of poems—the ballads—which are very valuable expressions of a certain traditional culture—the folk tradition. Having recorded these general impressions which relate it to a type we are familiar with, we can analyse it stanza by stanza, dwelling chiefly on the splendid *economy* and *underlying subtlety* of the ballad method.

- 1 There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
 And a wealthy wife was she;
 She had three stout and stalwart sons
 And sent them o'er the sea.

The way to ruin a ballad fatally is to read it in a sing-song. In a genuine ballad, the word-groups form *obstacles* to the metre; the strife thus aroused emphasises one or more of the words involved. Here, for instance, the first line has chief stresses on "wife" and "well" only. This brings out the alliteration which is carried through to the next line. The soft "w" sound with its suggestions of defencelessness and richness is stressed by the actual meaning of the words "wife" and "wealthy"; wealth is particularly brought to the fore by its association with the repetition of "wife." The alliteration of the next two lines is in sharp contrast; "s" and "st" sounds stand out in strong relief, helping the depicting of masculine strength. The wife, however, robs the sons of some of their strength; she sends them (implying compulsion) to sea: again alliteration helps the effect; the "stop" sound in "st" becomes weakened to the "s" sounds of the last line. On the story level we are aware of a corresponding conflict. Why did the woman, who, being rich, had no need to, force her sons to risk their lives? There is a suggestion of uncontrolled will-power, of something rather unnatural. We see then that the stock device of alliteration in the ballad technique is not just a trick, but an integral part of the desired effect (see page 127).

- 2 They hadna been a week from her,
 A week but barely ane,
 When word came to the carline wife
 That her three sons were gane.
- 3 They hadna been a week from her,
 A week but barely three,
 When word came to the carline wife
 That her sons she'd never see.

Here we notice another ballad feature—repetition, with slight variation, of stock phrases. We may not at first

feel quite so comfortable about our justification of this in this particular instance. The desired effect is, clearly, suspense. To achieve this, the formula is cleverly altered. In the first stanza, after one week, we merely hear that they are missing. After three weeks, she hears that she will never *see* them again (notice the actual words; *see* is important later). The repetition of the third line in each verse suggests the long-awaited, long-dreaded, *identical* return of the messenger. Again alliteration is integral. The adjective describing the wife, while it means the same as before, is significantly different in form. The hard "c" invests the woman with the unyielding strength we noticed in the first stanza. She no longer has feminine attributes: this is emphasised in the hard "g" of "gane" (a resonant form of "c"). But in the last line of this passage the hardness is dropped, and we get the sons with their alliterative strength again shorn down from "st" to "s"; again suggesting their strength has been weakened. Notice that we could not assign these significances to the alliteration *unless* the sense of the words were already indicated. Sounds can *aid* the sense; they cannot *represent* it by themselves, as the amateur critic so often mistakenly claims. Thus then we have seen that repetition has its value in advancing the effect, and that variation in the repetition has a definite significance. The poem is more complex than we thought!

4 " I wish the wind may never cease,
 Nor fashes in the flood,
 Till my three sons come hame to me,
 In earthly flesh and blood ! "

This is the woman's reply to the news; an intensification of the unnaturalness we sensed in the first stanza of the poem. At this important point in the structure, the change-over from the *exposition* to the *complication* of the plot, the direct narrative method is significantly changed to the *essential* technique of the ballad—revelation through *spoken* words. We get a sudden "close-up"—to point an important parallel with film technique.

Instead of submitting to this "act of God", her fierce *will-power*, already observed, rebels. She utters a curse. Nature is to be in as great a turmoil as she is until her sons come home *alive*. Notice how the apparently artless rhythm contrives to throw the chief emphasis of the whole verse on its most important (from what follows) word "earthly." A sing-song recitation would completely spoil this careful culmination. We notice too how the northern dialect, which has already provided us with an important word, "carline," saves what would otherwise be meaninglessly-jumbled sounds in "come home." Returning to "earthly flesh and blood" we now see how the message that she would never *see* her sons again has branded itself on her.

We realise that she has committed two offences against the Deity. She has interfered with the workings of the laws of nature (thus setting herself up as a rival), and with the laws of religion (demanding that her sons should come back alive from the grave). We notice that the force of religion, though never mentioned, is an integral part of what we now feel is irresistibly developing into a powerful tragedy. The die is cast.

5 It fell about the Martinmas
 When nights are lang and mirk,
 The carline wife's three sons came hame
 And their hats were o' the birk.

6 It neither grew in syke nor ditch
 Nor yet in ony sheugh;
 But at the gates o' Paradise,
 That birk grew fair eneugh.

7 "Blow up the fire, my maidens!
 Bring water from the well!
 For a' my house shall feast this night,
 Since my three sons are well."

These three stanzas form the climax of the tragedy. They are perhaps the supreme success of the ballad method: *i.e.* an indirectness under an apparently naïve

directness, which by its compressed economy reveals more, and is more effective, than stanza after stanza of lax narrative would be.

Let us first gather all the implications of the story. "Martinmas" is another stock but significant feature of ballad form; it is the time when things happen: we are thus warned that the crisis has come. As in a Shakespearean tragedy, everything seems to prosper with the hero until the climax or turning point comes, so, we are left to deduce, the woman's curse works until, to "settle" it, her sons come (or *are sent*, as she once *sent* them?) home apparently in flesh and blood. She rejoices at the success of her will-power, and feasts them.

Now let us see how this overt story is modified, enriched, and deepened by the undertones of suggestion in sound and sense which thicken splendidly at this crucial part of the story. We are not *told* whether her curse took effect or not. We have to deduce that from the story. The economy of the method omits all unnecessary material that would only weaken the effect. We leap straight from the curse to its fulfilment; how long the intervening time was, or what effects the curse had, does not matter, but the implication that they were so terrible that the Deity, seemingly giving in, restores her sons to deaden the curse is important. We have already appreciated the recognised significance of "Martinmas" in the ballad; we now notice the alliteration of "m" ("n" is closely associated) suggesting, along with the sense of the words, mystery. The power is still in the woman, so the hard "c" is again used in connection with her. The part-repetition (from the previous verse) in the third line is again significant and effective, helped also by the slowly and evenly mounting force of the line, culminating in the powerful stress on "cáme háme." But the skill of the author reaches its height in the apparently-irrelevant next line:—

And their hats were o' the birk.

The hard northern ending of "birch," which has already been anticipated in "mirk," brings one up as if with

a sharp breathless question. Why birch? What is the connection between our natural question "are they flesh and blood?" and this fantastic word? The unexpectedness of the word (which is in an important position, being a rhyme-word) and the suddenness of its conclusion somehow definitely establish a connection. We are left in sharp suspense. The next verse explains. It begins with a series of *homely* words (though their northern form disguises this for southerners)—syke, ditch, sheugh; we are still waiting near home. Then with an abrupt turn, grimly suggested by the hard "g" in gates, we are at the other end of creation—Paradise. There is consummate skill in the way this contrast is brought about. There is, indeed, a sort of grim note of exultation in the last line of this verse, as if the poet could not help crowing a little.

The irony suggested in "fair" is to be kept in mind throughout the peal of triumph (which makes the above line anticipatory in *tone*) in the next verse. She has won! The "b" alliteration suggests over-self-confidence, boasting. The "w" alliteration reintroduces the "wealth and softness" suggestions of the first verse of the poem into the disordered and slovenly household of mourning (fire low, no water, and yet it is night-time). The "a" "house" alliteration is the peak of her croak of triumph, but again the most important word is saved for the end—"well." The voice dwells heavily and lovingly on it, the more so as we have already heard it once in this verse, and it is thus already associated with the "w" alliteration suggestion.

8 And she has made to them a bed,
 She's made it large and wide;
 And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
 Sat down at the bedside.

The turn in the action has begun: again this is revealed by implication. The method of the ballad is very much akin to that of the Icelandic saga, where action is taken as the only sure and "objective" sign of emotion. In a Shakespearean tragedy the hero becomes the victim of

tragic "infatuation," whereby every step he takes to secure his own safety leads him more inevitably to his fate. In the ballad, the wife is, underneath at least, uneasily aware of something impending. She puts her sons in one bed (because they seem more "safe" so?) and prepares to keep watch. She seems aware of another Power creeping over her domain.

The first two lines suggest the mother's exclamatory joy—the simple naïve statements, the repetition (a feminine touch?) and the suggestion of prolonged pleasure (and of invitation) in the long vowels in "large" and "wide"; the effect is one of seduction. Underneath, however, there is determination and defiance, as we see in her next actions; the "t's" of the next line suggest a hurried snatching (of her cloak), while the significant inversion at the end suggests deliberate determination ("about her" would cause a falling rhythm, suggesting flippancy and weakness). This uncompromising will-power is further revealed by the initial emphasis on "sat" (carried over to "down," suggesting the action is to be prolonged), and the omission of conjunction and pronoun (which, again, would cause weakness), all this carefully arranged to come as a contrast to the deliberately-repeated fuller descriptions of action in the three preceding lines "and she; she; and she." The contrast suggests at the same time, by the sudden determination in the action, and by its unexpectedness (if anything, we should expect some such meaning as "goes off to bed"), her recognition that things are not what they seem. Once again the ballad technique is revealed as extraordinarily suggestive and subtle.

9 Up then crew the red red cock
 And up and crew the gray;
 The eldest to the youngest said
 "'Tis time we were away."

10 The cock he hadna craw'd but ance
 And clapp'd his wings at a',
 When the youngest to the eldest said
 "Brother, we must awa'.

- 11 The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
 The channerin' worm doth chide;
 Gin we be miss'd out o' our place
 A sair pain we maun bide."
- 12 " Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
 Lie still but if we may;
 Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
 She'll go mad ere it be day."

After the climax of a Shakespearean tragedy comes the " unravelling " of the plot, contrasted with the " ravel-ling " or " complication " in the mounting-up of the early part of the action. So in the ballad the mother's fate is debated. Two brothers are for leaving, the one realises what will happen if they do not stay—

She'll go mad ere it be day.

The issue of the tragedy has become clear. The punishment of the woman for setting up her might against the Deity's is in sight; her catastrophe lies in the balance.

The power of the mighty forces working themselves out is brought out by the comparative *length* of this stage of the action. The tension mounts through four stanzas, although, notice, nothing actually happens. This long holding up of the action to produce a tense effect of a mighty issue trembling in the balance is a perfect example of the ballad-maker's sense of form.

9. Again the ballad leaps over the intervening lapse of time, leaving us to deduce that this time the forces of nature have been too much for the woman, and she has fallen asleep in spite of her will-power. She is crumbling before our eyes, like the hero of a tragedy, but it is all done without a word, by a significant silence!

The first two lines suggest dawn in three ways; the cocks crowing, their colours (red sun in conflict with grey light), and the hard " c's," the " g," and the rolling " r's," all suggesting a complete contrast to the last two verses, and indicating that something hard

and definite (brutal?) has arrived with the new day. What this is is revealed in the last line.

10. The hard sounds are kept up in this verse, implying that the decision remains unaltered. When we have had stock repetition before, there was either a contrast intended, or the meaning was clinched, as it were, by the second blow of the hammer. This time the latter effect is used; we might possibly expect a contrast because there is the youngest-oldest contrast, but this is more than neutralised by the hard introductory lines which we have just dealt with.

11. This verse seems weak, even unnecessary. The hard sounds are kept up in the first line, weakened slightly, but still abrupt, in the "d's"; there is also internal rhyme, implying still more blows with the hammer. But the luscious "ch" sounds in the next line, while admirably suggesting the worms licking their imaginary chops over a new meal, seem to have no significant place in the sequence, while the last two lines seem undistinguished, degrading both in sound and sense. The implications also let down the tension and suggest ignoble reasons for the brothers having to return. Instead of it seeming an irresistible force of recall, we are told that it is for fear of corporeal punishment that they dare not stay. The whole thing becomes commonplace and contradictory: the inclusion of the worms seems to mean, if anything at all, that their missing bodies are being demanded by the hungry worms, while the next lines imply that there are hosts of others for them to feed on ("our place"). No, the verse is a collection of conventional ballad tags, and does not add anything (except bathos); it is also suspicious that the youngest brother should be given two verses.

12. But stanza 12 is another triumph of ballad skill. The middle brother (again we are left to make the deduction) speaks urgently in opposition. He makes the whole impending catastrophe suddenly clear.

She'll go mad ere it be day.

"Mad" is the significant word which bursts in on us after the two weak syllables preceding it. The sense is

deepened and illustrated by sound and rhythm. The many "i" sounds of the first two lines ("lie" could probably be included in these) have a plaintive imploring effect, increased by the "l" sounds, and given urgency by the repetitions of "lie still." But we come up against a brick wall with "may." This gives the impression (also implied in the pathetic "if only") that the plea is in vain, not in the brothers' ears but because of an inexorable "may not" from a higher power. These "i" sounds are carried over to the 3rd line, though not so strongly, and again they tend to isolate for prominence the last word—"wakes" (note the same vowel as in "may"), and the "m" alliteration suggests weeping but also prepares us for "mad" in the next line. This third line is breathless; the rhythm is "irregular"; the effect is almost of hysteria; the line is balanced about "miss" ("mother" has less stress, and leads up to it) and then there is another rush of weak syllables leading up, not down, to "wakes." There is excitement, but the undertone is despair.

13

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear,
 Fareweel to barn and byre,
 And fare ye weel the bonny lass
 That kindles my mother's fire."

So the catastrophe is brought about (in anticipation) by the method which by this time we can see is essential to the peculiar effect of underlying power and strength which the ballad style produces. The action of departure is revealed by a simple, yet utterly tragic, farewell speech by the three brothers in chorus. The mother's doom is lovingly sealed. Every word hammers a nail in her coffin. The restraint is superb; perhaps there could never be a better handling of the "catastrophe." The parallel is, probably, with the simplicity of Greek literature. Reluctance at leaving is shown by the farewells being extended through lessening degrees of importance—mother first, beloved farmstead next (if we think back, we see that this emphasises the mother's unnaturalness in turning her

sons into seamen—they are attached to the *land*), and last—a touch which leaves the ballad placed on the highest pinnacle of art—the maid, who is just lighting the fire. This indication that the morning of retribution has arrived, appropriately turning our attention from the brothers back to the mother (and to “she’ll go mad ere it be day”), is a superb finale to the Tragedy of the Wife of Usher’s Well.

If the student has followed this long “appreciation” carefully, he will have realised how much there is in apparently the simplest type of poem. He will have seen how an apparently casual eerie story has the perfect “flow-and-ebb” structure of a Shakespeare tragedy, and how every word, every letter almost, has an extraordinarily subtle chain of significances and cross-allusions. And all this perfect expression seems as artless and “primitive” as may be. We see also the tremendous value an authentic tradition may have; what fine instruments it puts ready to the poet’s hand.

And now we are going to “test” our findings by comparison with another “ballad”—the famous *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* by Keats. Some students will know this off by heart; the others can find it in any anthology, and as this comparison will concern only main qualities, and not details, there is no need to quote it in full.

There are at least two types of ballad-imitation, which has been a flourishing concern for three centuries; one whose sole aim is to *reproduce* a new ballad as nearly perfect as possible (e.g. Scott’s *Proud Maisie*); the second which tries to use the ballad technique to express something different. We shall easily decide that *La Belle Dame* belongs to this class: that is, that there is something, however elusive, besides the story. If we know something about Keats’ life we can see that this other element is autobiographical. The Knight at Arms is in a consumption like Keats; he is in the grip of an alluring yet fatal power (love?) which will cause his death (prophetic?). There is then a biographical interest in the poem, but notice that this does not, by itself, give the poem *value*: i.e. we do not get a valuable experience merely by recognising references to his own life “between the lines.” Reading

the poem through with our genuine ballad in mind we are struck, if we have "swallowed" uncritically the indiscriminate textbook eulogies of Keats, by a horrible intrinsic *inferiority*. We are perhaps stupefied and think there must be something wrong with our "comparative" method. Let us proceed to justify our judgment by analysing the poem under the qualities we discovered in *The Wife*.

First let us consider the structure. Is there anything like the organic, compressed, perfectly-controlled and evolved structure which we were at such pains to point out in the genuine ballad? The whole thing is limp and relaxed. The knight, found in depressing circumstances, relates his story. He has been seduced by a fairy lady who leads him a dance and drugs him. He has a vision of all her previous captives who warn him he is in a like position to them, and they are all dead. So when he wakes up he knows he is doomed to die. Hence, referring back to the beginning, this is why he is so depressed. This last is the only and very feeble attempt to introduce cross-allusion (except to the poet's own life, which does indeed add a certain morbid richness to the thin story) which we found so deepened and tightened the structure of *The Wife*. There is a climax, of sorts. Things seem to be going well with him till he falls asleep, and afterwards things go ill. But there is no point in it all (again excepted the biographical point), no strong forces in conflict working out to a resolution. It is all as limp and languid as the hero. We are, it is true, led to do some deduction at the end, *viz.* that the knight will die, but this is the only one, and how *tame* it is, after the grim and tragic surprises our deductions gave us in the former poem. To sum up—there is structural imitation in *La Belle Dame*, but the value is comparatively nil.

Next let us consider the style. We can analyse this under headings we have used in connection with *The Wife*, but first let us repeat our warning against the possible misinterpretation of the early part of this book. We shall probably find a fruitful field of stylistic elements—figures of speech, etc.—which may lead the student, full of the joy of

recognition, to claim therefore a high *value* for the poem. But applying our comparative test we shall see that in most cases what is organic in *The Wife* is a dead appendage in *La Belle Dame*.

(a) ALLITERATION. We remember the subtle successes of this traditional device in *The Wife*. We have an example in the first two lines of *La Belle Dame*: "l" sounds. Successful? Yes, since they suggest lament and loneliness. But they are not at the same time definite and subtle as in the first verse of *The Wife*; see our analysis of stanza 1 to point out the difference. We at once get the impression that with Keats alliteration is a device, a trick, not a significant part of a complex organism. Yet we find that this is the most successful example in the poem: met—meads; long—light; made—moan; sideways—sing; roots—relish; some—strange—she said; grot—gazed; dreamed—dream—dreamed; pale—princes, pale—pale. The last two give a good estimate of their value—mere repetition in a feeble attempt to impress. The others, except for the "l," "m" ones which form part of the general "romantic" plaintive atmosphere of the poem, have not even this excuse.

(b) REPETITION. See our account of the value of this in *The Wife*. The last two examples of alliteration above are also repetitions, but their value still remains at zero. "O what . . . loitering"—"O . . . woe-begone." There is no value here either. The second adds nothing to the meaning of the first. Again it is a trick of style. The last verse refers us back to the first; we are where we began again, that is all. It is an attempt to round off the poem attractively with which we may contrast the end of *The Wife*.

(c) NAIVETÉ. This is an intrinsic feature of the genuine ballad, where it is very valuable for making apparently simple statements which have underlying tones of significance and cross-allusion. In *La Belle Dame*, as any verse will show, it is an unpleasant affectation, a sophisticated attempt at appealing simplicity.

“ I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone——”

The betraying word is “ too.”

(d) ECONOMY. There are few adjectives in *The Wife*; those serve other purposes as well: *i.e.* they are significant in the texture of the poem. Notice how clotted with “ pretty ” adjectives *La Belle Dame* is; nearly every noun has its adjective—fragrant, wild, horrid, etc. They are embroideries, ornaments, anything but necessary except to build up the enervated “ glamorous ” Romanticism which depraves the poem all through. There are no adverbs unconnected with verbs in *The Wife*. They are not necessary to the stark action-words. In *La Belle Dame* we have “ palely,” “ fast,” “ sideways,” “ sure,” “ wide,” “ true ”—pale additions to verbs which the poet is frightened of leaving to stand by themselves. Notice the “ beautiful ” descriptions in verses 1 and 2. *The Wife* does not need to describe the season, or when it does, it is stocked with meaning. For instance, in “ lang and mirk ” the first adjective intensifies the ordeal of waiting the woman undergoes, the second is suitable for supernatural events.

(e) “ ARCHAISMS.” These, of course, do not occur in *The Wife*, where the language is alive and close to the spoken word. But Keats feels he must create the “ real ” ballad atmosphere and so gives a “ medieval ” flavour which merely defeats its object: “ ail,” “ withereth,” “ meads,” “ zone,” “ as she did love,” “ grot,” “ lullèd,” “ gapèd,” “ sojourn.” There is also the valueless and un-English trick of putting the adjective after the noun: “ relish sweet,” “ honey wild,” etc.; and other inversions, like “ with anguish moist and fever dew.” All these are obviously “ fake.”

(f) SIMILE, METAPHOR, etc. *The Wife* contains none. In *La Belle Dame*, stanza 3, it would be hard to imagine anything more unlike the ballad style than these forced metaphors for a pale face and a faint flush.

And now we come to the metre. For harmonious effect, Keats uses consistently a shortened last line, with often two or more stresses coming together:—"Nó bírds síng"; "cóld híll síde." These sound unusual, but that is all; there is no other significance. Contrast the variations in *The Wife*:—"sát dówn at the béd síde," "If my mòther should míss us when she wákes," and notice what important purposes these serve. Positioning of words is not important in *La Belle Dame*—either at the ends of lines—arms, loitering, mead, sweet, sore, too, wide, here, etc.—or at positions inside the line. Attempts to make us wait till the next line for a word do not succeed in making that word important—"a faery's song," "with kisses four:" perhaps "Hath thée in thrall," emphasised also by alliteration, is successful, since it helps to imply that *they* had also been in thrall.

We have, in our previous analysis, established the high value of *The Wife*. There are other points, such as the use made of the supernatural both in this poem and in *La Belle Dame*, which the student can make for himself. By means of our delicately-recording instrument we have "exposed" *La Belle Dame*. But it may be said we have neglected in our estimate *the* important factor, *i.e.* general effect. *La Belle Dame* has "atmosphere," we may say. By that we probably mean it has a "complete" effect on us. We discussed this point in our general approach to "valuation." We do not need to deny that it is successful in its "appeal": it is a case of a work which is successful because it calls forth our stock responses, in this case our luscious, morbid, adolescent Romanticism. We decided that this success of a valueless response was its own condemnation.

The most difficult of all works of art to estimate is a poem. With the very detailed, though incomplete, appreciation provided above for the student, which, if it has been successful, has made him "work," he should be in a position to apply the method to the simpler, though more unwieldy, cases of the drama, the essay, and the novel. The following exercises will provide him with the necessary initial approach.

The student who is interested in literary value and tradition is referred to *Practical Criticism* by I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* by I. A. Richards, and *Fiction and the Reading Public* by Q. D. Leavis. Good exercises are contained in *Reading and Discrimination* by D. Thompson, and *Culture and Environment* by Leavis and Thompson.

EXERCISE V.

1. Estimate the literary value of *Henry Esmond* compared with *Ivanhoe* or *Kenilworth*.

2. Estimate the value of *Moby Dick* compared with *Treasure Island*.

3. Estimate the value of *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* (by T. F. Powys) compared with (a) *The Pilgrim's Progress*, (b) *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

4. Estimate the value of *A Passage to India* (E. M. Forster) compared with any novel by Galsworthy.

5. Appreciate and contrast (a) *The Waste Land* (T. S. Eliot) with *A Testament of Beauty* (R. Bridges); (b) *Ode to a Nightingale* (Keats) with *Ode to a Skylark* (Shelley); (c) A page of *Religio Medici* (Browne) with a page of *Imperfect Sympathies* (Lamb); (d) *The Playboy of the Western World* (Synge) with *The Devil's Disciple* (Shaw), (e) *Hero and Leander* (Marlowe) with *St. Agnes Eve* (Keats); (f) *The Secret Agent* (Conrad) with *Angel Pavement* (Priestley); (g) *Measure for Measure* (Shakespeare) with *The Cenci* (Shelley); (h) A war poem by Wilfred Owen with a war poem by Rupert Brooke or Robert Nichols; (i) *The Way of the World* (Congreve) with *The School for Scandal* (Sheridan); (j) *Change in the Village* (George Bourne) with *The Village Book* (Williamson); (k) *Gryll Grange* (Peacock) with *Point Counter Point* (A. Huxley); (l) *Tom Jones* (Fielding) with *Vanity Fair* (Thackeray); (m) *Don Juan* (Byron) with *Man and Superman* (Shaw);

(*n*) *Omoo* or *Typee* (Herman Melville) with *Coral Island* (Ballantyne); (*o*) *Sons and Lovers* (D. H. Lawrence) with *The Way of all Flesh* (S. Butler); (*p*) *Nineteen Nineteen*, *Hundred and Nineteenth Parallel*, *The Big Money* (Dos Passos) with *The Modern Comedy* (Galsworthy); (*q*) *The Tiger* (Blake) with *The Bull* (R. Hodgson); (*r*) *Song to David* (Smart) with *Song of Creation* (Hodgson); (*s*) *The Village* (Crabbe) with *The Land* (Sackville West); (*t*) *A Modest Proposal* (Swift) with *Murder Considered as a Fine Art* (De Quincey); (*u*) *Piers Plowman* (Langland) with *The Faerie Queene* (Spenser); (*v*) *The Second Shepherd's Play* (Towneley cycle) with *The Rock* (T. S. Eliot); *The Pardoner's Tale* (Chaucer) with any tale by Poe; (*w*) *Sonnets* (Shakespeare) with *Modern Love* (Meredith); (*x*) Any tale by Crabbe with any tale by Tennyson; (*y*) *Bartholomew Fair* (Jonson) with *Oliver Twist* (Dickens); (*z*) *Hudibras* (Butler) with *Sludge the Medium* (Browning).

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The numbers refer in general to pages. Sometimes, however, a number is followed by a second number in parentheses, *e.g.* 85 (60). This signifies that the reference is to an *exercise*, page 85, passage 60.

The reader is thus enabled to look up with the aid of the index all comments on the author he is studying, and then, when he has completed his work, to turn to exercises on that author.

The passages in Exercise III. are indexed last under their respective authors; hence any curious reader can discover the writers with comparatively little trouble.

In the case of the best-known writers it has been considered unnecessary to add remarks.

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BACON, SIR FRANCIS (1561-1626), planned great reforms in science; he wrote much in Latin, to ensure the immortality of his work, but to-day he is known for his essays written in English. 44, 10, 24, 30 (5), 83 (71)

Ballad, 37-8, 10, 115-16

BALLANTYNE, boys' story writer, 131

BARRIE, SIR JAMES (1860-1937), writer of novels of Scots life (*The Little Minister*, etc.) and of plays (*Peter Pan*, *Quality Street*, etc.), 64-5

BEDDOES, THOMAS L. (1803-49), touched with madness. Wrote wild and morbid verse of great beauty, and much influenced by Elizabethan dramatists. His plays are faulty in structure. 55, 32 (13)

BLAKE, WILLIAM (1757-1827). His *Songs of Innocence* stand apart from the classical verse of his time; his *Prophetic Books* are entirely unlike anything else in English literature. 52-3, 28 (3), 65, 89 (93), 131

BLUNT, WILLIAM SCAWEN, born 1840, 5 (iv)

- BOURNE, GEORGE, an important writer on village life, in particular on how its traditions have changed under Industrialism (*The Wheelwright's Shop*, C.U.P.), 130
- BRIDGES, ROBERT (1844-1930), 78 (45), 130
- BROOKE, RUPERT (1887-1915), a young poet who died in the War, 130 (5)
- BROWNE, SIR THOMAS (1605-82), author of *Religio Medici*, *Urn-Burial*, etc., books full of quaint speculations and odd humour. 45, 10, 30 (5), 49, 50, 84 (73), 130
- BROWNE, WILLIAM (1591-1643), best known for his *Britannia's Pastorals*, nature verse with a foretaste of Keats, 73 (24)
- BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT (1806-61), wife of Robert Browning, wrote *Aurora Leigh* (a novel in verse), *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, etc. 85 (76)
- BROWNING, ROBERT (1812-89), wrote *The Ring and the Book*, *Bells and Pomegranates*, *Men and Women*, etc., 56, 58, 9, 16, 29 (3), 31 (8), 59, 79 (50), 131
- BUNYAN, JOHN (1628-88), tinker; author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, etc., imprisoned for preaching. 46, 21, 70 (14), 130 (3)
- BURKE, EDMUND (1729-97), statesman and writer; the father of English political philosophy. 50, 71 (20)
- BURNE-JONES, EDWARD (1833-98), Pre-Raphaelite painter, 60
- BURNS, ROBERT (1759-96), 52, 53, 22, 89 (92)
- BURTON, ROBERT (1577-1640), wrote *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, a mine of curious information, 91 (102)
- BUTLER, SAMUEL (1612-80), Victorian essayist and satirist (*Erewhon*, etc.), author of *Hudibras*, a verse burlesque ridiculing the Puritans, 16, 70 (16), 131
- BYRON, LORD (1788-1824), 53-4, 15, 16, 40, 77 (41), 130
- CÆDMON, Anglo-Saxon poet, 3
- CALVERLEY, CHARLES STUART (1831-84), famous for his parodies and humorous verse, 76 (37)
- CAMPION, THOMAS (?-1619), writer of dainty songs, 41
- CAREW, THOMAS (1598?-1639?), Caroline lyricist, 41
- CARLYLE, THOMAS (1795-1881), historian and writer on social problems; author of *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, *Sartor Resartus*, etc. 9, 51-2, 67 (4)
- CARROLL, LEWIS (C. L. Dodgson) (1832-98), mathematician and author of *Alice in Wonderland* and other children's books, 9, 24, 61
- Characters; short sketches of types (e.g. the Serving-Man) very popular in the early seventeenth century, 45
- CHAUCER, GEOFFREY (1340?-1400), 9, 36, 131
- CHÉNIER, ANDRÉ (1762-94), French writer of elegies and idylls, 40
- CHESTERTON, GILBERT KEITH (1874-1936), author of essays (*Tremendous Trifles*, etc.), novels (*The Innocence of Father Brown*, etc.), poems, criticism, etc. 8, 19, 24, 29 (4), 52, 68 (6), 69 (12)
- CLARENDON, EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF (1608-74), wrote a History of the Civil War, in a style marked by very long and involved sentences, 89 (95)

- Classical (Pseudo) Style. *See* Pope and Dryden
- Cliché, 27, 40
- Climax, 25, 18
- COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR (1772-1834), poet, metaphysician, and critic, famous for his share in *Lyrical Ballads*, the manifesto of the Romantic reaction, 17, 28 (3), 31 (8), 35, 111, 79 (53)
- COLLINS, WILLIAM (1721-59), a forerunner of the Romantics, 48, 86 (84)
- Colour, 26-7
- Comic verse, 54. *See also under* Pun, Hood, Carroll, Calverley
- "Comparative method," 111-14
- Conceited Style, 41, 44
- CONGREVE, W. (1670-1729), Restoration dramatist, 130
- CONRAD, JOSEPH, born 1857, author of *Typhoon* and other tales, mainly concerned with the sea, 64, 130
- Contrast, 22-5
- Corinthians, First Epistle to the*, 12, 18
- Couplet, 16, 39
- COWLEY, ABRAHAM (1618-67), writer of metaphysical verse and of charming essays in a simple style, 86 (80)
- COWPER, WILLIAM (1731-1800), author of many hymns, *The Task*, *John Gilpin*, etc., in his feeling for nature was a forerunner of the Romantics, 88 (89), 91 (101)
- CRABBE, GEORGE (1754-1832), "Pope in worsted stockings"; author of realistic tales and sketches in verse, 52-3, 56, 87 (85)
- DACTYL, 18
- DAVIDSON, JOHN (1857-1909), 81 (62)
- DEFOE, DANIEL (1659-1731), author of *Robinson Crusoe* and other novels, 35, 76 (39)
- DE LA MARE, WALTER JOHN, born 1873, writer of verse and prose romances, 55, 56, 82 (65)
- DE MORGAN, WILLIAM (1839-1917), worker in stained glass and pottery; writer of novels (*Joseph Vance*, etc.), 64
- DE QUINCEY (1785-1859), one of Wordsworth's circle, 50, 72 (21), 131
- Detail, Use of, 8, 9, 36-7
- DICKENS, CHARLES (1812-70), 51-2, 6-7 (2, 4, 8), 13, 102-4, 9, 19, 24, 33 (18), 35, 56, 58, 64, 68 (8), 131
- DONNE, JOHN (1573?-1631), passed a wild youth, but later repented, was ordained, and died with the reputation of a saint; metaphysical poet, and sermon-writer. 42-3, 94-8, 10, 87 (87), 115
- DOS PASSOS, contemporary American novelist of a high rank, 131
- DRAYTON, MICHAEL (1563?-1631), writer of *Nymphidia*, a fairy poem; *Polyolbion*, a poetical survey of England; etc., 75 (33)
- DRUMMOND, WILLIAM (1585-1649), Elizabethan writer of sonnets and other poems, 91 (103)
- DRYDEN, JOHN (1631-1700), Restoration writer of plays, poems (*Absalom and Achitophel*, *Religio Laici*, etc.), criticism, etc., 46, 24, 48, 52, 72 (23), 75 (34)
- EARLE, JOHN (1601?-1665), a writer of *Characters*, 45
- Economy, 128

ELIOT, GEORGE (Mary Ann; Mrs. Cross) (1819-80), author of *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and other novels, notable for psychological truth, the best of which deal with Warwickshire life, 6 (4), 7 (7), 82 (66)

ELIOT, T. S., born 1888, most significant of contemporary poets; also responsible, in his earlier critical essays, for a re-valuation of critical standards and of many of our writers (*Poems* 1911-32, *Selected Essays*). 114, 130, 131

Elizabethan Age, 38-44, 13, 37, 47, 49, 50, 52, 65

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Epigrammatic Style, 45, 61-3

Euphuism (so called from its occurrence in Lyly's *Euphues*), 44

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FELLTHAM, OWEN (1602?-68?), essayist, 86 (81)

FIELDING, HENRY (1707-54), the father of the English novel, 49, 24, 130

Figures of Speech, 18-22

FITZGERALD, EDWARD (1809-83), best known for his very free translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 60, 31 (5), 32 (13), 80 (55)

FLECKER, JAMES ELROY (1884-1915), spent much of his time in the East. Wrote poems and a play, *Hassan*. 69 (9)

FLETCHER, GILES (1588-1623). See Phineas Fletcher. 75 (32)

FLETCHER, PHINEAS (1582-1650), brother of Giles. Both imitated Spenser. 72 (22)

FORSTER, E. M., born 1879, one of the few contemporary novelists who repays study (*A Passage to India*, *Howard's End*, etc.), 113

Free verse, 59

FULLER, THOMAS (1608-61), wrote *Worthies of England*, *Church History of Britain*, etc., all full of quips and conceits, 89 (94)

Futurist Style, 59

GALSWORTHY, born 1867, writer of novels—*Fraternity*, *The Man of Property*, etc.; plays—*The Silver Box*, *Strife*, etc.; short tales and verse. His work is marked by love of beauty, interest in social problems, and a great pity for men and animals. 50, 60, 63, 69 (10), 131

GASKELL, MRS. (1810-65), novelist of domestic and factory life, 6 (3)

Genesis, 34

GIBBON, EDWARD (1737-94), author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 50, 36, 73 (26)

GOLDSMITH, OLIVER (1728-74), poet, novelist, and essayist. He belonged to the classical school, but shows some traces of romanticism. 24, 106, 76 (38), 86 (82)

Grand Style, 47-8

GRAY, THOMAS (1716-71), a poet mainly classical in diction, but a forerunner of the Romantics in interests, 9, 14, 21, 30 (5), 48, 52, 53

HARDY, THOMAS, O.M. (1840-1928), at first an architect, later a novelist (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, etc.) of Wessex, and poet, 6 (4, 6), 10, 13, 14, 22-3, 27, 28 (3), 29 (4), 55, 64

HAZLITT, WILLIAM (1778-1830), essayist and critic, 74 (28)

- HERRICK, ROBERT (1591-1674), Caroline lyricist, singer of country life and fair maids, 41, 16, 52, 106, 91 (104)
- HEYWOOD, THOMAS (?-1650?), Elizabethan dramatist, 41
- HODGSON, RALPH, born 1871. Some of his poems were published as broadsheets. 65, 68 (5), 131
- HOOD, THOMAS (1799-1845), best known as a comic poet, but wrote also exquisite serious verse, 23, 27 (1), 30 (5)
- HOPKINS, G. M., a Victorian poet whose poems were not published till 1918, since when they have had a remarkable influence (*Poems*, Oxford Bookshelf, O.U.P.), 115
- HUXLEY, ALDOUS, born 1894, contemporary novelist (*Antic Hay*, *Brave New World*, etc.), 130
- Hyperbolic Style, 43
- IAMB, 17, 18
- IBSEN, HENRIK (1828-1906), Norwegian dramatist largely preoccupied with social and philosophic theories. Author of *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler*, etc. 64
- Icelandic Saga, 120
- Incongruity, 22-3
- Insubstantial Style, 54
- Intellectualism, 61-4
- Irony, 22
- Isaiah*, 12
- JAMES, *Epistle of St.*, 42
- JAMES, HENRY (1843-1916). American novelist, who late in life became a nationalised Englishman. Wrote *Daisy Miller*, etc. 19, 31 (5), 58
- JOHNSON, DR. SAMUEL (1709-84), 24, 70 (15)
- Johnsonese, 49-50, 66
- JONSON, BEN (1573-1637), Elizabethan dramatist with realist and classical sympathies, 41, 131
- Journalese, 65-66
- KEATS, JOHN (1795-1821), 57, 9, 22, 26, 27, 27 (1), 28 (1), 31 (7, 8), 37, 40, 55, 56, 59, 84 (75), 125
- KENNEDY, BART, born 1861, writer of prose sketches; half-timer, mill-hand, sailor, labourer, tramp, gold-miner, actor, etc., 59
- KIPLING, RUDYARD (1865-1936), writer of Indian and army tales (*Soldier Tales*, etc.), novels (*Kim*, etc.), poems (*Barrack-room Ballads*, etc.), children's books. Style vivid, but often crude. 19, 77 (42), 78 (47)
- KYD, THOMAS (16th century), author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, full of horror and bloodshed, 43
- LA Belle Dame Sans Merci* (Keats), comparison with *Wife of Usher's Well*, 125-9
- LAMB, CHARLES (1775-1834), famous for his *Essays of Elia* and critical work, 50, 106, 30 (4), 73 (25), 130
- Lamentations*, 22
- LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE (1775-1864), writer of exquisite true-classical prose (*Imaginary Conversations*), and verse, 51, 30 (4), 41, 71 (19), 79 (54)
- LANGLAND, W. (14th century), reputed author of *Piers Plowman*, an alliterative allegory, 131
- LAWRENCE, D. H. (1885-1930), great contemporary novelist, 131

LEWIS, SINCLAIR, born 1885, novelist, 58, 66 (1)
 LUCAS, E. V., famous chiefly for his essays, 68 (7)
 LYL, JOHN (1554?-1606?), author of plays and *Euphues*, a prose romance in an affected style, 14, 44, 83 (70)

MACAULAY, LORD (1800-59), writer of the stirring *Lays of Ancient Rome*, of essays and reviews, and of history, 4 (1), 8, 24, 31 (7), 36, 50, 80 (56), 80 (59)

MAETERLINCK, born 1862, Belgian writer of eerie prose and plays, author of *The Blue Bird*, etc., 56

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MAHONY, F. (1805-66), poet, 75 (35)

MALORY, SIR THOMAS (15th century), author of the *Morte d'Arthur*, 34-5

Mannerisms, 27

MARLOWE, CHRISTOPHER (1564-93), first great Elizabethan dramatist; author of *Dr. Faustus*, etc. 25, 37, 41, 43, 71 (17), 130

MASEFIELD, JOHN (born 1874), Poet Laureate, writer of poems, plays (including *The Tragedy of Nan*), and poems, 60, 67 (2)

Melody of words, 14-15

MELVILLE, HERMAN (1819-91), American novelist: wrote best stories about sea and life in the Pacific, 131

MEREDITH, GEORGE (1828-1909), author of novels (*Diana of the Crossways*, etc.) and poems (*Modern Love*, etc.), 9, 14, 29 (4), 30 (5), 52, 58, 78 (48), 131

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MIDDLETON, THOMAS (1570?-1627), Elizabethan dramatist, 41

MILTON, JOHN (1608-74), 47-8, 45, 8, 9, 10, 20, 25, 31 (8), 73 (27), 84 (72), 86 (83), 88 (91)

MORRIS, WILLIAM (1834-96), designer of artistic furnishings; Pre-Raphaelite; writer of prose and verse romances, etc., 60, 35, 10, 38

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NASH, THOMAS (1567-1601), Elizabethan playwright and pamphleteer, 37

NEWMAN, CARDINAL JOHN HENRY (1801-90), now remembered mainly for his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, written in a beautiful and distinguished prose; author of *Lead, Kindly Light*, and other hymns, 82 (67)

NICHOLS, ROBERT, born 1893, poet, 66 (3), 130

NOYES, ALFRED, born 1880, poet, 83 (69)

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Onomatopoeia, 14

OWEN, WILFRID, the only War poet of real value; strong influence on younger poets, 130

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PATER, WALTER (1839-94), wrote essays and a novel in a very elaborate and careful style, 50, 60

Pathetic Fallacy, 22

PEACOCK, T. L. (1785-1866), satirical novelist (*Nightmare Abbey*, etc.), 130

- PEPYS, SAMUEL (1633-1703), kept during the Restoration period a private diary written in a racy, colloquial style, 69 (11)
- Personification, 21-2, 9, 18, 108
- Plain Style, 46, 48-9, 52-3
- POE, E. A. (1809-49), American short-story writer, 131
- POPE, ALEXANDER (1688-1744), head of the pseudo-classical school of verse; famous for his *Dunciad*, *Rape of the Lock*, *Essay on Man*, etc., 48, 9, 16, 24, 38, 39, 49, 52, 55, 90 (97, 100), 95 (100)
- POUND, EZRA, born 1885, poet, 70 (13)
- POWYS, T. F., a major contemporary novelist and short-story writer (*Fables*, *Mr. Tasker's Gods*, etc.), 130
- Prayer Book (in various forms, 1549-1662), 21
- Pre-Raphaelite movement, 60, 37
- PRIESTLEY, J. B., best-seller novelist and dramatist, 130
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- Psalms*, 10, 12
- Pun, 23, 18
- RABELAIS (?-1553), author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, 37
- RALEIGH, SIR WALTER (1552?-1618), writer of verse and (in his *History of the World*) of a prose unequal, but at its best full of majestic harmony, 87 (86)
- Realism, 56-9. *See also* CRABBE
- Realism (pseudo): warning against, 110
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- Restoration, 46, 42
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- Rhythm, 17-19
- Rime, 16-17
- Romantic movement, 52-6, 111
- ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA (1830-94), writer in *Goblin Market* and other poems of fantastic but beautiful verse; influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement, 78 (49)
- ROSSETTI, DANTE GABRIEL (1828-82), Pre-Raphaelite artist and poet, translator of early Italian lyrics, author of *The Blessed Damozel*, 60, 30 (5), 36, 79 (51)
- RUSKIN, JOHN (1819-1901), author of *Modern Painters*, *Unto this Last*, and other works on art, economics, and sociology, 22, 60, 81 (60)
- SACKVILLE WEST, V., poetess, 131
- SCOTT, SIR WALTER (1771-1832), 6 (4), 23, 24, 33 (17), 50, 81 (61), 130 (1), 125
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- SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM (1564-1616), 100-2, 104-5, 12, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29 (4), 30 (5), 31-2 (8), 36, 41, 43, 74 (30, 31), 84 (74), 115, 122, 130, 131
- SHAW, GEORGE BERNARD, born 1856, author of novels, tracts, and of plays (including *Man and Superman* and *Candida*), often dealing with social problems, 62-3, 130
- SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE (1792-1822), 54-5, 8, 13, 15, 22, 27, 28 (3), 29 (4), 31 (8), 33 (18), 40, 83 (68), 85 (77), 130
- SHERIDAN, RICHARD BRINSLEY (1751-1816), writer of *The School for Scandal*, *The Rivals*, and other comedies of manners, 61, 28 (1), 130
- SHIRLEY, JAMES (1596-1666), poet, 22

- SHORTER, DORA SIGERSON (1866-1918), poet, 82 (64)
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 SIDNEY, SIR PHILIP (1554-86), author of *Arcadia*, sonnets (*Astrophel and Stella*), and an *Apologie for Poetrie*, 44, 39, 41, 88 (90)
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 SMART, CHRISTOPHER (1722-70), poet famous for one poem—*The Song to David*, 131
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 SPENSER, EDMUND (1552?-99), author of *The Shepherd's Calendar* and *The Faerie Queene*, 39-40, 17, 27, 14, 20, 36, 39, 47, 74 (29), 131
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 STERNE, LAURENCE (1713-68), author of *The Sentimental Journey* and *Tristram Shandy*, written in a highly individual, allusive, disjointed prose, 49
 STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS (1850-94), wrote *Treasure Island*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, essays, and tales, in a beautiful, but sometimes "tormented" prose, 60, 5 (iii), 14, 130
 SUCKLING, SIR JOHN (1609?-1642), Cavalier lyricist, 41
 SWIFT, JONATHAN (1667-1745), author of *Gulliver's Travels*, 48, 10, 56, 63, 77 (43), 131
 SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES (1837-1909), great inventor of new metres; author of *Atalanta*, *Songs before Sunrise*, etc., 60, 11, 13, 55, 71 (18)
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 SYMONS, ARTHUR, born 1865, poet and prose writer, marked by elaborate aestheticism, 79 (52)
 SYNGE, J. M. (1871-1909), Irish playwright, contemporary with Yeats, 130
 TAYLOR, BISHOP JEREMY (1613-67), author of *Holy Living*, *Holy Dying*, etc., in elegant rather florid prose, full of similes, 85 (79)
 TENNYSON, LORD ALFRED (1809-92), 56, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 (1), 29 (3), 30 (4), 31 (7, 8, 9), 32 (11, 13), 33 (18), 35, 36, 40, 55, 59, 85 (78), 131
 THACKERAY, WILLIAM MAKEPEACE (1811-63), author of *Vanity Fair*, *Esmond*, and other famous novels, 1-2, 26, 64, 80 (58), 130
 THOMPSON, FRANCIS (1857-1907), author of *The Hound of Heaven* and other poems, 3, 81 (63)
 THOMSON, JAMES (1700-48), author of *The Seasons*, pseudo-classic in style, but with a new feeling for Nature, 40, 12, 90 (98)
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 URQUHART, SIR THOMAS (1611-60), Scots writer of "aureate," rhetorical, and pedantic prose, 89 (96)
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 WALLER, EDMUND (1606-87), one of the earliest users of the end-stopped heroic couplet and of classical plain but elegant style, 46

- WALTON, IZAAC (1593-1683), author of the *Compleat Angler*, 87 (88)
- WEBSTER, JOHN, Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist, 41
- WELLS, HERBERT GEORGE (born 1866), author of *Tono Bungay* and other novels on social problems; *The Food of the Gods*, and other scientific romances, essays, and some fine short stories, 63-4
- Whimsical style, 50
- WHITMAN, WALT. (1819-92), American writer in free verse, impatient of the conventions of civilisation; his best known work is *Leaves of Grass*, 59
- Wife of Usher's Well*, analysis of, 115-25: comparison with *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, 125-9
- WILDE, OSCAR (1856-1900), 60-3, 50
- WILCOX, ELLA WHEELER (1855-1923), American poet, author of *Poems of Passion*, *Poems of Pleasure*, *Poems of Progress*, etc., 10
- WILLIAMSON, H., writer on country life, 130
- WITHER, GEORGE (1588-1667), writer of lyrics, 41
- WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (1770-1850), 52-3, 105-6, 26, 29 (4), 31 (8, 9), 55, 80 (57)
- WOTTON, SIR HENRY (1568-1639), poet, 90 (99)
- YEATS, WILLIAM BUTLER (born 1865), Irish poet and playwright, author of *The Countess Cathleen*, etc.; a leader of the Irish literary movement, 60-1, 5 (ii), 25, 78 (46)

